

MEMOIRS OF THE VERNEY FAMILY
DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Vol. II.

By JOHN G. VERNEY, Esq.



Sir Peter Lely

SIR RALPH VERNEY, BART.

DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

COMPILED FROM THE PAPERS AND ILLUSTRATED BY THE PORTRAITS
AT CLAYDON HOUSE BY

FRANCES PARTHENOPE VERNEY
AND

MARGARET M. VERNEY



THE GARDEN (From a Sketch by F. P. Lady Verney)

more yet of this,
For 'tis a chronicle of day for day
Not a religion for a breakfast

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MEMOIRS OF THE VERNEY FAMILY

CHAPTER XXXV.

SIR RALPH CROSSES CROMWELL'S PATH.

1654 1655.

SIR RALPH felt but little sympathy with the members whom Cromwell ejected from the House of Commons in April 1653; he had neither forgiven nor forgotten his own expulsion—indeed the Long Parliament, which he and his father had entered with such high hopes in 1640, had dwindled to a remnant ‘there were none to praise, and very few to love.’

England was divided into eleven districts under as many major-generals, who exercised police jurisdiction and levied a 10-per-cent. tax on the fortunes of all who had served the King, to pay the expenses of keeping order. Bucks was under the command of the ‘Lord Deputy’ Charles Fleetwood. Sir Ralph writes: ‘I confess I love Old England very well, but as things are carried here the gentry cannot joy much to bee in it.’ Colonel Henry Verney’s letters are a curious contrast to his brother’s: ‘the gentry’ that he lived amongst cared little for politics, but endeavoured by hunting, racing, and gambling to relieve the dulness of the Puritan rule; Cromwell’s son and son-in-law seem to have been amongst them. Henry is visiting ‘my Lady Cuttings at Tustinge,’ and at ‘Sir Richard Sloughboroughs, a good friend’s house.’ He writes to his brother from

Feb. 1655 'Thrusten': 'I cannot send you any newse, more then what company came here, the last night unexpected, to hunt the fox for a weeke. My Lord Clo'well [Richard Cromwell?], my Lord Claypole, my Lord Sands, my Lord Deleware, Sir William Kingsmill, Sir Hue Middleton, and divers other gentlemen. It is soe darke that I cannot see to write a word more, then to tell you, wee keepe ill hours, and lead a lude life, which is noe way pleasinge to me.'

April 2,
1655. 'Tell Harry,' writes Dr. Denton, 'he had better keepe his money and lay it out on some of my Lord Duke [of Richmond]'s horses, then loose it to fooles and bunglers.'

Aug. 18,
1655. 'I have bine att Stowe neere this weeke, and have waighted on S^r Richard daley to the forrest, and had good sport, but ill fortune with my dogg Hector, for the first course a did run their, a was spoyld in a battle with a bucke, never dogg gott more credit, the combate held neare halfe an hower, afore 20 of us, and all we could doe, could neither save dog nor kill the deare, though wee had severall times hold of him, it was forty to one I had not let out S^r Richards gutts, loosinge his hold att his hornes, my lord Claypoll seeinge the mettle & greate couradge the dog had after recevinge five stuck deepe wounds, would not bee deney'd the dog to breede one, soe, much against my will, I was forst to present him, by his lordship's surgons greate care the dog may live to run againe, his greateness is more fond of him than ever I was, which does not a little please me.' Three weeks later he writes again: 'Our huntinge att the forrest is now done, and his lordshipp gone, and my dogg Hector like to doe well again, S^r William Farmer att the killinge of his three staggs entertainde the whole company for tow dayes nobly, I dare say it cost him att the lest £100. . . . My cousin Smith treated his honour att a dinner hansomely; feastinge of late I have had plentifully but never hartely merey for want of your company.' Aunt Isham, though she dearly loves a little gambling, is quite worn out; Henry made them so late every night at Hillesden; 'he will never give one over as Longe as one is able to sit up.' Sir Ralph had presented her with 'a paire of sable

Brasletts, for you may weare them at Play, which you cannot doe your muffle, and these may possibly save you from many colds this winter.'

Sir Ralph was in more congenial society: he paid a quiet visit to his devoted friends Vere, Lady Clawdy, and Dorothy Leeke, who was installed as her companion, at Croweshall. He and Sir Nathaniel Hobart travelled back together and had many misadventures by the way, but as Sir Nathaniel has sent 'the whole story to my Lady,' writes Sir Ralph to Doll, 'for me to undertake it after him, were farre worse then to write Myrza after Denham'

Sweet Doll, to whom Claydon had been such a happy home in the old days, might not have been unwilling to fill the vacant chair on the other side the fire. They were on the old happy terms of intimacy, but Sir Ralph's letters probably meant more to the woman who received them than to the man who wrote them, and through all her banter there runs a vein of tender and pathetic sentiment. 'If I could quarrel with you for anything,' he wrote to her after his visit to Croweshall, 'it should bee for the compliments in your letter. I thought you had knowne me and loved me better, than to use me with soe much ceremony. I pray let your next bee in a more friendly straine.' 'Tis now the new fashion for Maydens in town to ride a Pick Pack; you ever loved to follow the mode. I wish you would try it now to Claydon or if you like any other way better take your owne choyce, please your selfe, for soe you come, you shall most certainly please mee.' 'I know your old deare friend Mr. London findes you such a variety of entertainements that you have not leasure to cast your thoughts on Claydon, but least I should be quite forgot, give these lines leave to visit you in my absence.'

'Consider what you have lost,' Doll writes of the marriage of an heiress, 'for not asking the question . . . but you are difficult to be plesed and it must be half don before you speak, I pray let me court your mistres (I will make a journey a pourpos) I know your yumur so well, that I have no fear but to pleas you . . . you could not have spent your

time more charitably if I may be your judg, then in righting a letter of so much variety to me, it hath much revived my sperits, the lose of your company & the rest of my frinds hath made me to retire into my self, thus I have spent much of my time in thought . . . but I resolve to forget you all & get out of this ugly yumur, for fear I grow lean. The hope of Aunt Verney's legesy made me think of an other jorney to Loundon, that I might spend it hansomly, but sene she meanes to live, I am not without fear that you may supplant me in hir favor.'

April 28,
1656.

'Sweet Cozen,' he replies, 'your request is granted, when I come at a Mistris, you shall court her for me; noe person that I know can doe it with more addresse & cuning, and I am sure you love your friendes so well, that (haveing undertaken it) you will performe it with uoe less fidelity then affection. But, alas, the maine thing, A Mistris is yet wanting, I have been fumbling soe many yeares with soe ill successe, that unlesse you find one out, I am not like to speed in that; therefore I pray thinko well of it, and assure yóur selfe, if she bee but rich enough, & old enough she canot but bee wise enough and good enough for me.'

Doll pays him back his jest with spirit. 'The character you have given me of your Mistris, assures me that you will not ingadj me, only you resovle to be sivell, and I will be so to; and leave you to your one chois, with this wish that you may be as happi as you deserve.' If the adjective 'rich' seemed purposely to exclude herself, Doll had at least the consolation of seeing that the wealthy and charming widow Dame Vere Gawdy did not advance a step nearer to the position which, as her friends believed, she also felt herself eminently qualified to adorn.

Sir Ralph's most finished and elaborate compliments are reserved for his letters to Lady Gawdy, and she is not to be outdone in civilities, though she may lament that she can only express herself 'so exactly like a Suffolke Cloune . . . yet in my harte,' she says, 'you shall bee treated as I would bee in heaven.' Her love of building makes Croweshall 'as durty as Claydon without dors,' and Doll assures Sir Ralph



VERE, LADY GAWDY

that he may fancy himself 'at home in earnest'; he sends Lady Gawdy all kinds of plants, from watercress to 'cedar berries,' hoping she may live to see the cedars out top her tallest oaks. 'If they do not prosper,' she writes, 'they will miss of so grateful a soil as the heart of your obliged humble sarvant.'

Many merry letters passed between them on the subject of Lady Gawdy's fortune and her expectations. 'Madame, Sept. 3,
1655 give me leave I beseech you, to give you joy of the greate Wealth thats coming towards you; in earnest you are now thought one of the Richest Widdowes in England, for since the Death of Lady Clerke, we heare Mrs. Daniell hath publiquely declared she hath none but you and Yours to care for. Were I now at Liberty I would make suite to bee your cash keeper, however if your Baggs are rotten with rusty gold or not bigg enough to hold it all, let me but know it, and a Dozen or two of Leather Meale Baggs shall be immediately provided and sent downe by Madame y^r humble servant R. V.'

'Sir,' replies the lady, 'I doe experiment the fullshood of fame severely, for if the kindness of the parson did answer the report, twould bee noe difficulty to inclose my welth in the crasiest bags I have, & if it were exposed to view I should not neede a gaurd to secure it; the esteeme of my freinds is A welth I only covitt, and your selfe may assure a most vallewable share of it to Sir, Your most obliged sarvant, Vere Gawdy.'

There was a report that Sir Ralph had been arrested, and Dr. Denton writes: 'This is to lett you know that Jan. 18,
1655. you are in the tower, gett out as well as you can, Verney for Veruham hath caused the rumor & mistake.' 'Here is newes more than is true in abundance. That that is March 15
and 17,
1655. most generally received is that Sr Joseph Wagstaffe cum multis aliis is up in the West, seized Judge Rolls & others & all their horses & money at Salisbury. That Sr Richard Mauleverer is upp in the north & endeavoured the seizinge of York Castle etc. There is much talking of risinge in divers other countries, w^{ch} I had rather beleuve then goe to see. . . . I ghesse there will be a generall settlement of the

militia in all counties, & a generall securinge, & though I dare be a compurgator for Claydon & Hillesdon & Ratley that you have neyther head nor purse in the rebellions designe, yett the names are malignant & that will goe far in prudence.'

In the midst of these public anxieties the trees that Sir Ralph had ordered from Holland kept arriving, much bruised in the packing; but Dr. Denton hopes 'the Abele Trees will make him an amends.' Their arrival at Claydon is delayed, and Sir Ralph writes: 'The advertisement came in pudding-time,' for to morrow the cart was to set forwards but upon this I have stayed it till Monday.'

Many of Sir Ralph's friends were supporting the Government: Fiennes had been made Lord Keeper, Sir Roger wished for a place as Groom of the Stole, Nat. Hobart was hoping for a Mastership in Chancery, and Sir Richard Temple for a place in the 'Protector's Court.' He also talked of going to Jamaica, but this came to nothing, as Dr. Denton had foreseen. 'Sir Rich: Temple's purport of goinge for gold is 1,000 times better than holdinge of a trenchar, but I doubt he loves sleepinge in a whole skin to well to goe that iourney.'

Penelope Denton was in bitter trouble. A law-suit was pending between her husband and his mother. Sir Ralph took infinite trouble about it, for Pen's sake only, as he thought 'The Squire' 'a beast.' In March John Denton is in prison in Oxford Castle for debt, and Pen is 'almost brought to deths dore: . . . this 3 days I have not eate more then a mess of milk & a negg; my one seller beare is to strong for me to drink. I must sell myself to my sking, goods & all to defray this great chargis.' . . . 'The sheriff & gaolers' fees cost 8 or 10*l*. & their 2 cows have to be sold.' 'Brother no creatur that beggs from dore to dore can live in A mener condishition then I do. Had my Good father or mother A lived I am confident it would A greved there harts to a sene or hard of my greate strats.'

March 16,
1655.

April 6,
1655.

¹ *I.e.* in the nick of time.

'When George in pudding-time came o'er

And moderate men looked big.'—*The Vicar of Bray*.

A man-servant of John Denton's was 'a great vilin,' Pen writes, ' & had sayd that of me to his master that he could not mak good. The good lady at Ditchley & Sir Harry & his Lady was with me when I was ill, & I did one [own] soe much trouble to my Lady, which was no more then my looks did betray me in ; that both herself & Sir Harry did tak upon them to tell my husband that if he did not kick the fellow out of dors, no gentilman but would scorne to keep him company, thos words of those parsons did work so much upon my husband that with my paying him his hold years wages, I thank God he is gon from us both.'

While Sir Ralph was about Pen's affairs an urgent request came from Cary that he would stand godfather to an expected baby, early in April, as she would 'unwillingly kepe a child long unbaptized.' John Stewkeley, who desired a man's society during his 'gander-month,' wrote heartlessly. 'S', My Lady. . . & I are ambitious of y' Company here Feb 26, this spring, that you may observe the melody her crying out, 1655 & the singing of the Nitingale will make together . . . shee will earnestly expect your coming, which will bee noe less acceptable to her then the midwife; I desire you would bring my namesake, the Winton Scholler [his own boy] will bee proud of his acquaintance. If you have not better Con-
veniency, here are choice of Coaches now, for the South hampton Coachman hath sett up another one wth 6 horses, by Hoburn bridge, at the Rose or King's Armes . . . there is another sett up lately in Winchester.' Sir Ralph promised to be with them, but when John Stewkeley wrote to announce the birth of a girl, 'which after 2 boyes is very acceptable,' he was still detained by the Dentons' lawsuit. 'One side is soe needy that a little will not serve theire turne; & the other side is so hide bound that they will part with nothing thats considerable. Pen is soe importunate & passionate for my stay, that I know not how to leave her at this nick of time,' wrote Sir Ralph, willing to disoblige the sister he loved best, rather than abandon the one most uncongenial to him, in her time of need. He therefore appealed to Aunt Isham at Preshaw to be his proxy. 'Heertofore May 18, 1655.

May 23,
1655.

you know you have worne Breeches for mee, & now if you please to put them on againe & christen my little neece, I shall take it for a very greate favour.' 'All though I be not so youthfull as I was hearetofor,' she replied, 'to put one Briches, yett I have my Husbonde heare as shall be att youre sarvis, and this will be the seconde time as he is to Ancere for you & you can doe noe lese then say as the Papeses used to say to one the other . Say so many Prayeres for me today, & I will say as many for you tomorroe.' She pretends to think that another cause keeps him in town, and John Stewkeley overwhelms him with playful reproaches and is no longer his 'passionately affectionate, but his affectionately passionate, brother & serv^t'

May 25,
1655.

Sir Ralph had sufficient sense of humour to enjoy his own jokes, but it seldom reached to those of other people. He was detained in town partly by Cary's own affairs, for he was trying to get the jointure to which she was entitled from Cuddesdon out of her mother-in-law, old Lady Gardiner, almost as tough a customer as the Denton dowager. He was tired and harassed; their raillery about 'rich fluttering widows' seemed very ill-timed, and he wrote back with less than his usual courtesy and sweet temper. 'I thought it utterly impossible my kindnesse, charity & honour should all be caled in question for doing that which (being well considered) could neither in kindnesse, charity nor honour bee well declined. . . . I shall take heed how I engage my selfe in any businesse but my owne: & therefore I have now sent all the Papers about Cudsdon to the Sollicitour . . . least if heerafter any other sister should send for mee, I might not bee at Liberty to attend, & therby (though very undeservedly) occation a new action of unkindnesse to be brought against me.' Happily, he was too much beloved at Preshaw for his letter to give offence. John Stewkeley apologised handsomely, and said that 'his wife's grief had been such that a gentlewoman told him . . . that of her knowledge a Lady died of noe other sickness.'

The plots and the arrests continued; Mrs. Isham writes:
June 1655. 'Moste of our Gentre is secured and took to Oxford. S^r

Jhon. Bire Lase [Borlase], Lord Loues [?], Lord Folke. [? Falkland] att Ox. all : , Lorde Linesay thay have bine with, but the Lorde Candine comeing a suter to his Dafter he is Lett alone a while, and whate to thinke of my Hus: I knowe not, Nothing they can have against him I knowe and wheather I had best sende him out of the way I know not, for none knowes whate these be had away for, itt may be all your cases. . . . My cays be all loste & I have no more paper.'

Mun, having wound up with Dr. Creighton, is at the Hague, with good introductions, but is clamouring to return to England, feeling himself quite a stranger there. Sir Ralph answers him in a severe mood. 'I have now received yours June 11,
1655. & in it a direction for my letters to you, but soe lame & soe ill English & nonesence that I am ashamed to write it. "For Mr Edmund Verney at Mr Bates in the signe of the Samson in die Pots in den Hagh." You should have said "At Mr Bates his House or Shopp or Lodging," or some such like place, or tis not good English. Secondly In the signe of the Sampson is nonsence, it should have beene At the Signe; your very French Phrase might teach you to write better sence, and English too, but that you are soe carelesse that you minde nothing. Tis noe less a wonder then a trouble to me to see that at neare nineteen yeares of age (though noe care, nor cost hath beene wanting for your Breeding) you are not yet able to write a superscription of a letter. For shame, bee not still thus childish. . . . You are very much obliged to Sr Charles Cotterell for assisting you in buying your things: I hope you will bee advised by him, & endeavour to imitate him, for hee is a very sober discret person.'

Two days after this precise letter was penned, in the midst of his quiet and useful life at Claydon, Sir Ralph was suddenly arrested, on June 13, 1655, by the Lord Protector's soldiers, as a suspected Royalist. His next letter to Edmund tells the story:—'Yours of 1st June I received this very June 15,
1655. evening at London being just now brought Prisoner to Towne with divers Lords and other persons of quallity, for

wee know not what; our owne innocence is a Protection that canot be taken from us; had you been heere, you had certainly beene in Prison too, for they tooke both father and sonn in many places, and though I must confesse the Soldiers that tooke me at Claydon on Wednesday last, used me very civilly, yet they tooke all the Pistolls, & Swords in the house, & carried me to Northampton that very night, and the next morning (though 'twas a fast ¹) made us goe to Brickill, & this night they brought us heather. What shall be donn with us, and that multitude of Gentry that is secured in every county, wee canot yet imagen, but I am glad with all my hart you were not heere, for you are yet unacquainted with the great charge, trouble, and inconveniences of a Prison, and I hope the times will grow so quiet that you may enjoy your freedome better then wee have donn. I pray husband your money as well as possibly you can, for these are not only very troublesome, but chargable times, and though I am willing to suffer first, yet if this contineu, you must thinke to suffer too.'

June 18,
1655

The shock was great to every one at Claydon. Will Roades tried to get another interview with his master. 'I was at Northampton, but cam to late to speak with you there,' he writes, 'but I hop in God to see your Saffe Return, and for afflictions whille we live in this vaille of miserey must continually be loocked for, but yf you souffer afflictions heere for Righteousness saiko, hapy are you in your sufferings; but I hop you shall have no cause but however it shall be, the hartie prayer of your humble servant to all-mightie god to give you a strong faith in Jesus Christ which is not worthy to be compared to any tribulations heere, for a good conscience is a conteniall feast which I doubt not of in you, so I pray god bless you & yours.' This devout letter was followed by more earthly consolations in the form of a venison pasty. 'If it plese god I should a ben happie to have seen you Eate part of it at Claydon.'

June 22,
1655.

Sir Ralph wrote to Mun again from 'St. James His

¹ Probably the day of intercession for the persecuted Protestants of Piedmont.

house. Childe, The letter I writ you on Friday last will fully informe you of my being brought Prisoner to London. That night late many were committed to the Gatehouse, & the next morning at least eleven more of us were comitted to Lambeth House, & that very afternoone my selfe with divers others were committed to this place, where every man hath a guard uppon him day & night, but wee are not kept upp close nor are our friends kept from us, I thanke god I am in good aire & good health & my innocency keepes me cheerfull.'

Letters of condolence poured in and good wishes for his 'Inlargement.' Mrs. Isham writes. 'With great joie did I receive your leter, for the D^r rit soe dolfuley to me, that I could naither eaght, Drinke nor Sleepe the night I herd of it. . . . I am confident that you air tow Discrate as to have had a hand in the last rising.' Doll Leeke is full of sympathy; but 'my dispairing nature is apt to fear the worst, my sister givs me some hope of your release.' Lady Gawdy wishes that his 'offence against the State, had merited so ill a goale as Croweshall.' He writes to her cheerfully. 'I doubt not but you have heard how highly the Protector hath obliged me, in sending for me from my owne cottage to lodge me in his owne Pallase, & presently put me into a condition to keepe a Guard both day & night, weh is usuall to none but Princes, & all this without my seeking I assure you; & for ought I know (if I behave my selfe well) hee may probably exalt mee somewhat 8 or 10 Rounds Higher too.' Sir Roger writes in answer to such another letter: 'I had much rather seen you in my poore Cottage then to have heard of you in a pallace. . . . I am glad it is no worse since it is no better with you, and that you have wipt off that dirty & wett journey so fairely without prejudice to yo^r health. Its well you are so merry, I am sure yo^r letter was read with sober sadness in so much that it begott my wife a fitt of trembling in hir heart, which shee is too subject upon all such occasions. When I heare you are free you shall heare more from me, but I pray know, that I will have nothing to doe with any prisoner of that nature, till he hath

June 20,
1655.

June 25,
1655.

June 24,
1655.

clear'd himself before my L^d, therefore as you would avoyd my censure, acquitt yo^r self like an honest man, and then my hermitage will be the fitter to receive you.'

Sir Ralph was in pain with a shoulder he had put out some years before; the anxieties and 'inconveniences' of his confinement were affecting his spirits, and he was obliged to employ Robin Kibble, a drunken and careless servant, to write for him. He replied to his old friend with considerable irritation from 'S^t James his House,' taking seriously Sir Roger's joke, that he must clear his character as a malignant before he could be received at Wroxall.

July 9,
1655

Trusty Roger was quite upset at the least threatened interruption of a friendship that had stood the test of such dark and difficult years. He hastens to reply. 'Had my last letter been intercepted and so interpreted by one of the new gang, I should have pass't it over with a pleasant smile; but that Sr. R. V. could finde in his heart to make so unkinde a construction of it, the test of a whole synod could not have gained my beliefe, had I not his owne hand for it. I see I must hecrafter endeavor to be merry and wise, and to weigh my words before they are sent abroad, least they be found too light: it had not been the first time if you had suffered my folly in that kinde with a great deale of candor, and that now a little jesting should prove sufficient to render me an unworthy clown, by an implicit prohibiting you my house as it were, under the notion of a timorous distemper that of late hath seised upon me, of entertaining such as you are. Let me tell you that I never was in love with the name of Malignant nor any that in earnest did mention it, but hecrafter I shall dread & avoyd it for my own part, as I would the taking of a beare by the tooth. I am not willing to dwell upon this ungrateful subject but rather believe that St. James indited your letter & you were only the scribe. But is it possible that any expression that fell from my pen, should alter the resolution of Sir R. V.? I have alwaies thought him as fixed as the earth, but I shall lay the whole blame upon my self. All this to St. James—as for yourself I wish you at liberty & in no worse place then I am in my

self. . . . Your most affectionate and discomposed friend and servant.'

But before the soft answer came Sir Ralph had forgotten that there was any cause of offence. 'Certainly either you or I or both of us,' he wrote, 'are grown notable Drunkards, & know not what wee write. What could you take ill in my last letter that you should thus chide me? I will not chide again, the Victory shall be yours, for you have soe longe & often obleiged me, that you may now use me as you list. I could finde in my hart to breake prison to cleare this Cloud, but not being conscious of ever writing, speaking, or soe much as thinking anything to your prejudice, I know (according to your old rules of kindnesse & justice) you will doe me that right as to esteeme me still your faithfull friend & servant, R. V.' 'Whether I was drunk or madd it matters not,' Sir Roger rejoined, 'if I were mistaken I am glad, and shall be as willing to cate my words as my meat when I am hungry.' Sir Ralph retorts that if he misunderstands him again he will get him 'a home in Bedlam or at least in this placo, where for ought I see, you may have leasure enough to coole both your heeles and your head too, for wee heare no newes of our Enlargement: yet some few of us with greate struggling & solicitations have gotten leave to goe home, but soe bound & fetterd, that most of us had much rather remain heere as wee are, then returne to our owne houses with such shackels on our persons, & our Fortunes too. . . . You will not be satisfied unless I spend the summer with you, but alas Sir that's already gon, this 5 weekes imprisonment hath almost eaten up the summer quarter . . . all that I can say more is that when the Protector hath donn with mee and that you are alone att Wroxall you may freely dispose of me.'

Sir Ralph's friends were working for his release. There is a copy of a letter from Colonel Thomas Hammond to a person in authority unnamed: 'Our ould acquaintance makes me write to you about a cosen of my wife's, Sr Ralfe Verny, intreating you to stand his friend; he has by a mistake (I am confident) been delivered to you as a delinquent. He

July 12,
1655.

July 16,
1655.

July 19,
1655.

was sitting in the Parlement-house when his father was killed at Edgehill, & sent in voluntarily two horses into the Parlements army, tis true in the yeare 1643 he went beyond sea, it was for his wife's health, who about 3 or 4 yeares after dyed there, & he returned not long after for England. Now you know as much as I, I am confident you will be as tender in oppressing one well affected, as just against a malignant, I am far from pleading for a malignant, we in Surry if men testify ther good affections (though malignants before) by our Commission are directed to spare them, I leave all this with you knowing you will proceed in righteousnessse.'

July 4,
1655.

Doll Leeke writes: 'O that Saint James stood by Crowthall wood, I then wold have a care of you myself; it is possible I might be as great a vexation to you as your jalar, but it should be performed with so much kindness that in charity you would bear with me. . . . I hear some are relest and I beleve you have many frinds that wold interest them selfs for you, and prevaill I am confident, I pray stand not to much upon your puntillios for ther is nothing now but self intrest to be preferd: thay say you will have no body medell in this affair; I hope it is an alterable resolution.' She begs him to have a doctor's advice, and gives her own. 'I am confident baithing in milk & water wold do you good; I mean a generall bath, not only your arm . . . I fear you vex yourself, but dear cosen let not your enemies have that advantage over you, for if you weer all destroyed it wold be a pleasure to them; therefore I beg of you to resolve to be mery & to make much of yourself.' Aunt Sherard's stumbling pen hopes that 'as you waier tacken off sodin, you will be relested of A sodin tow.' John Stewkeley writes his kind inquiries. 'The messenger came a Coachman, but returns Postillion and is upon the spurr.' Sir Ralph replies: 'Wee that are restrayned have no present hope to enjoy our owne Houses in hast, patience is an excellent Vertue & our new masters are resolved to see how large a proportion wee have of it.'

July 20
1655.

July 30
1657.

Sir Ralph writes to Lady Gawdy: 'I am very much

joyed at Sir Francis Coke's enlargement tis a good president for all we Prisoners to urge to our new masters, when the right plannet reigneth we shall get out . . . tis generally beleeved the greate and unexpected blow given to the Fleet in the Indies (which is like to bee the Losse of that designe) will put them to soe greate straights for money that their necessities (though not our guilt) will oblige them to use the greater severities towards the Cavalier Party, to whome they attribute all their misfortunes, but with what justice this can bee layd unto their charge is beyond my apprehension.' To Doll Leeke he writes 'I knew that Sir Ed : Syd [enchain] (with the helpe of Coll Coke) procured that favour for Sir Francis, but I have noe reason to expect the like, for since my being seized the Collonell hath beene soe strangely shie of mee, that some have woondered at it, & yett I doe not know, that ever in this or any other thing, I oppressed him with the least of my concernes.'

Mun is sick of the Low Countries ; 'j'ai assez vu de ces pais icy, je ne m'en soucie plus' ; if he may not come home he would go to Heidelberg and study mathematics and German ; there is good society there. Sir Ralph hopes to obtain leave to travel, when he might meet Mun abroad ; but this is doubtful 'unlesse it bee to the Spaw, or some other Waters, & thats usually granted but for 3 or 6 months at most.' He is not anxious for Mun's return on account of the 'strange life our youth now lead for want of a Court and Playes to entertaine them.' 'Mun confesseth to me hee hath scarce looked at a Booke since his coming from Utrecht, if hee hath neglected his exercizes as much, I beleeve hee may come home & keepe sheep for hee will bee fit for little else . . . he hath a greate aversion to the Court and dancing.'

July 18,
1655.

The much abused Mun asks for 150 yards of black ribbon to trim a grey and black cloth doublet, which will make a proper attire with scarlet silk stockings, or with black, if his father prefers them ; as if a 'nice' fancy in stockings would be likely to appeal to him in 'St. James his

Nov. 23,
1655.

house'; he also requires some Cordovan gloves. Sir Ralph thinks the quantity of ribbon excessive: 'so a suite bee whole, cleane, & fashionable I care not how plaine it bee.' Later in the autumn Mun complains of the unhealthiness of the Hague, which he says has never suited him, but it is too late to think of moving now, 'car j'ai achepté du tourfe pour me servir tout l'hiver.'

Mr. William Gee and his wife had ventured back to England, and were anxious to receive Sir Ralph. Their first child, so lovingly expected, died in the spring of 1654. 'Sweet Babby, tis happy,' wrote Sir Ralph, '& the more that it had noe share in the common sinnes and sufferings of these ill times.' 'My wife's faithfull service,' wrote Cousin Gee, '& hearty wishes for your liberty to endure the penance of a third piece of Beefe, which is all you will find att Tuppence, more then a reall welcome.'

Aug. 13,
1655.

Doll Leeke and Lady Hobart had all sorts of fine plans for Sir Ralph's release. Lady Warwick's name had been mentioned amongst others who might be approached, as she had more influence than ever in high places. Sir Ralph's reply must have fallen like a cold shower-bath upon these kind busybodies. 'I earnestly beseech you,' he wrote to Lady Hobart, 'not to write to the Person you wott of, concerning mee, or my release. I came in with the crowd, and shall willingly attend to goe out with it. Heere are many that gett off dayly (& I am glad to see the dore open) but to say truth some goe on soe hard, & others on soe unhansome Termes, that I had much rather remaine where I am, then bee at Claydon, on those conditions, although my owne occations did now as much as ever require me there. Divers of our Lords (with your Coz: Sir Fred:) have writ to the Protector & most of the Knights & gentlemen have petitioned him last Weeke, but as yet they can get noe answere. Sir Justinian Isham & my selfe sit still & are willing to see how they are like to succeed, before we appeare too pressing upon our new Masters; but we have a petition ready, which we hope may bee received at any time; being we crave nothing in it, but what they ought to

grant to every Englishman in our condition, as well as unto him or me.'

Sir Ralph claimed equal and public justice for all, not special favour for himself won by influence and intrigue; a position which the patriots of the Civil War would have warmly approved.

Henry writes, having just attended the assizes at Buckingham: 'I must needs say, the Judge att the sise, in his chardge, gave non of us much hopes of any of your libertyes, but didd tell us a did beelive the countrey in generall might bee discontented att their restraint, a excused the Protector and sed as state matters did stand, his highnesse had a good reason for it, & that the innosent should not suffer, for his designe was onley to punish the guilty; but not a word of any treyall when you should bee hard. . . . M^r Sheriff Kept a free and noble table for all comimers, and wisht you heartely att it.'

'Tis now neare seaven weekes since wee were taken,' Sir Ralph writes to Mr. Cordell, ' & as yet wee have never been examined, neither can we yet discover why we were restrayned, nor when we shall be released.'

'Cozen Stafford is at Liberty uppon Bond, Collonell Ingolsby procured it, & one Collonell Pasterne a Norfolke gentleman is also freed, but Sir Justinian Isham & my selfe & all the rest of our number are still in Lunbo, though we are daily promised a generall discharge.' Sir Ralph writes to Mrs. Sherard that he is allowed to remove to rooms belonging to her sister Susan Abercromby. 'When I was at St. James his Tennis Court, though I had a very good chamber, yet I had noe place for a servant in the house; they were forced, after I was in my bedd, to goe lodg neare Charing Crosse, which was soe inconvenient that I desired to change my Quarters; and my Aunts house being within the Jurisdiction of the Garrison; she with her mayd resolved to pack away for a considerable time.' Mrs. Sherard is surprised that he should be allowed 'noe greater Liberty, for I her of many as aier quite free, and com into the Countrey which was formerly Deepely ingaged for the lat King.'

Sept 6,
1655

'Your one wisdom & the protector's ill nature,' writes Lady Gawdy, 'makes mee dispare of seeinge you this sommer in my durty habitation.' 'Divers of the Grandies,' Sir Ralph replies, 'doe confidently assure us wee shall bee released as soone as the Protector is well & perfectly recovered, but wee have been told the same story in effect at least 6 weekes togeather, yet Jeffery Palmer's being sett at liberty, gives us some small hope that wee may bee soe too.' The Protector had been ailing at intervals all through the summer, the Earl of Norwich wrote to Mr. Secretary Nicholas in the usual tone of a Royalist, alluding to the 'Arch Rebelle'. 'Questionlesse Cromwell is in huge disorder, as well in his owne bowels as his government.'

June 15,
1655

Sept. 3,
1655

Cousin Stafford writes after his release that if those who have been imprisoned are forbidden to go to London, at least he and Sir Ralph may hope to visit each other in Bucks, 'but how great our unhappiness may prove, if wee shall be deprived of the tuition of vigilant Major Browne'

The troubles of the time put a strain upon all ordinary friendships. Sir Ralph had been reminding his father's old friend Lady Carnarvon (*née* Herbert), whose picture by Vandyke was amongst his most valued possessions, of a debt owed by her late husband to Sir Edmund amounting to 116*l.* 10*s.* Cousin Thomas Stafford had been the intermediary. 'I moved yo^r business,' he writes, 'to the Lady Carnarvon according to yo^r instruction, and I found her very unwilling to meddle wth it, having putt on a resolution (upon the affronts of Russell and unhandsom carriage of the wise Lord) to wth draw her selfe fro' all business of that nature for a time, But shee was pleased to say that Sir Orlando Bridgman's judgment must bee taken upon the securitie for all my lord's fathers debtes.' Sir Ralph had been asked the previous year to be a trustee to the 'little Lord' Carnarvon, but as these debts were still unsettled he thought himself not in a position to accept the trust. He wrote to Mr. Stafford: 'I thanke you for mooving the Lady Carnarvon about my money, but since she is soe coole in it, I shall let it rest awhile, had my late Father, or Mother been living, I

Sept. 5,
1655.

dare say this debt should have beene preferred in point of payment before any other. 'The service my Father did that family deserves a better requitall, & soe I shall tell my Lady the very next time I see her.' But the money was soon after repaid, and the old cordial relations were restored.

Sir Ralph was still in durance vile; mothers and nurses were in despair, no child in the family could be properly christened in his absence. 'Nat Smith,' grandson of Nat Hobart, was baptised at Radcliffe, 'and for want of a godly ^{July 3,} godfather,' Henry writes, 'they invited my worshipp to ¹⁶⁵⁵ stand, for w^{ch} in a word I did with a grave & religious grace; many promises I did make for you, such if you performe not, shall bee put on your score, in the next world, and not mine, for I doe as little love deepe and sollem ingagements, as your honour doth entringe into bonds. I have given 20s. to the nurse and 20s. to the midwife and 10s. to the nurse-keeper as you ordered.' Sir Ralph wrote to the baby's grandmother. 'Sweet Cosen, I am infinitely joyed at your ^{July 21,} dearest daughter's saufe Delivery, and wish myself Delivered ¹⁶⁵⁵ too. . . . Nattecock like an honest Fellow & kinde, visited me on Sunday.'

For these country gentlemen, accustomed to live in the fresh air and to do all their business on horseback, it was most irksome and unwholesome to be penned up in London during the summer months, and one after another suffered in health. From the day of his enforced ride to London as a prisoner, in June, Sir Ralph was never in the saddle again till the end of October. So full are the records of this year that we can trace his occupations day by day. He eagerly welcomed every post that visited him. 'Letters,' he says, 'are a very greate comforte in the absence of our friendes, yet they cannot answer us a question though wee desire to bee satisfied in twenty severall perticulars concerning those wee love.'

Of good society there was no lack at St. James'; during the early part of the time 'new prisoners of quality' were 'dayly brought in.' But Sir Ralph had not much heart to join in it; he took his meals alone, and although Sir Roger

supposed 'that your whole company keepe together and are as merry as birds in a Cage,' Doll Leeke heard from Sir Frederick Cornwallis, who had just been let out of the cage, that Sir Ralph was not at all sociable. 'He was asked how you did, & he ansred you never came amongst them, therfor he could give no account of you.'

But Sir Ralph had at least one old acquaintance at St. James' who took the same line as he did about their detention, and with whom he had a great deal of pleasant intercourse. Sir Justinian Isham, who could win from sweet saucy Dorothy Osborne only the nickname of 'Sir Solomon,' had since found in Vere Leigh a wife who appreciated his solid excellence. He was sadly familiar with bonds and fines, and it added much to his present trouble that he had been torn away from his home when his wife most needed his care and love. News of the birth of a baby Vere reached him at St. James'.

Sir Ralph never lost the opportunity of forwarding a good match. He had Edmund to provide for and young Sir Charles Gawdy; Sir Justinian's four fair daughters by his first wife had considerable portions; hence the subject was of great mutual concern, and left room for 'treaties' as interesting and complicated as the moves in a game of chess. Sir Ralph writes to Lady Gawdy of the Miss Ishams with approval: 'The young Women have been bredd more in the country then at London.' 'Their Father dwells neare Northampton, is a very discreet person, of a plentiful Fortune & of an antient Family, who professeth (soe there bee a competencie) to preferre the parts & person of A man before his Fortune.' Of maidens Sir Ralph had Cary's step-daughters to think of, a number of young Hobarts and Dentons, and very specially his own sister Betty, who thus expressed her sense of his merits: 'I cannot say you have no skill in providing Husbands, for I am confident when you tack such an imployment upon you, that you will bring it to perfection.' But, alas for Betty's hopes, Sir Ralph found eldest sons a good deal casier to treat for than younger daughters, unless they were heiresses like Margaret

July 12,
1655

and Mary Eure, who were besieged with suitors. Robert Cotton of Combermere is 'languishing for love of Margaret, sayes his prayers backwards, & wishes all ill-luck to his rivalls.' Mrs. Isham recommends 'Mr Bacchus' daughter and heiress' for Mun, but the 'little nitty old man' is treating simultaneously in another quarter, to Sir Ralph's great wrath, so these negotiations serve only to while away the time.

Lady Gawdy ventures to remonstrate again with Sir Ralph for refusing the conditions of release offered him. 'I am aprehensive you will not let selfe interest have any power to sway the lest part of that that lookes like honour. Pray only lay aside singularity, for to bee vertuous alone will bee interpreted A vise.' Sept. 26,
1655.

Sir Ralph was not likely to be convinced by such feminine reasoning; but with many apologies his anxious friends return to the charge: Doll Leeke hopes he will not 'be perticular in the refusall, for Liberty is so presious (& the parsons you receve it from so indifrant whether you have it or noe) that you ought rather to court it, then to be nise in accepting, pardon me if I have said too much.' Sept. 26,
1655.

Cousin Stafford's men after hay-harvest have searched the hedgerows for elms for Sir Ralph. 'I pray remonber my Sweet Bryer,' he writes; 'if those that gather the setts use to come to Winslow market, it will cost nothing to bring them to Claydon, for I will appoint my man Roades to take care of it there, hee seldome misses a markott day, I thinke you told mee they were about halfe a crown or 3 shillings a thousand, which is cheape enough, & if they be to be had at soe easy a Rate, I would have 2000 gathered as soone as you please. . . . Charme them least they send ordinary Bryers, for sweet Bryers; & lett me know if I may have woodbines at the same rate.' The very sound of woodbine and sweetbriar must have made Sir Ralph long to see the last remains of summer in his garden. Sir Roger, in despair, hopes at least that he may spend Christmas with them 'if non bee before hand with me, as I trust they are not, especially St. James.' Oct. 3,
1655.

London,
Oct. 8,
1655.

Wearied out at last, though not convinced, Sir Ralph felt that he would make himself too conspicuous by being the only prisoner who refused to be liberated on terms which even Sir Justinian had now accepted. He therefore entered into a bond to the Lord Protector for 2,000*l*, together with Dr. William Denton and Mr. Thomas Leeke; Lieut.-Col. Worsley to deliver up the bond at the end of a year if it were not forfeited in the meantime. 'Colonel Worsley then discharged Sir Ralph the next day out of prison' This is his own account of it 'On Thursday with the rest of the crowd, I sealed a Bond soe full of Barbarous conditions that I am ashamed to insert them here. All the Favour that could bee obtained was to get it limited for a yeare, but tis so untowardly penned that I doubt they will continue it longer on us. The Truth is if any one person of those I use to converse with all, had thought fit to refuse it, I should have done so too, but to bee singular in such a thing, at such a time, would have been interpreted meerly to be stubbornesse'

Oct. 23,
1655.

Cary Gardiner wrote on the anniversary of the battle of Edgehill, 'The fatall day to Ingland & our family,' to congratulate him 'on his enlargement.'

There is a memorandum in his own handwriting. 'The 26 Octob: 1655 I writ Mun word, I was come to Claydon uppon Bond.' Sir Roger writes 'I am gladd any part of you is at liberty, though you bee no man of your hands, your feet will serve my turn, if you will but make good use of them now they are at liberty. Come when you will, I feare you not, since your hands are tied.'

Oct 16,
1655

'Forgive me,' wrote Lady Gawdy, 'if I receive satisfaction in what you regrett at—your liberty. I looke at the impossibility of your haveinge it on termes agreeable to your judgment, and all that are over Come, are not conquered, nor are we answerable for our faits. There is a soveranity in honour which noe usurpation can depose, you are safe in that, & so longe may looke with contempt on inferior objects. If my desire of youre freedom bee an evidencce

of my folly . . . tis noe muse that our sex should want wisdom.'

Sir Ralph's reply defines his position. 'Madame, you are highly charitable in cheering upp a person in my condition, & I humbly thank you for it; for though the Example of very many (farre Wiser & better men then my selfe) might somewhat excuse my signing that ugly conditioned Bond, yet your approbation gives me farre more satisfaction then all that they have done. The truth is, though I infinitely desired to bee at home, & my occasions very much require mee there, yet it was to avoyd singularity rather then any thinge else, that induced mee to seale it; and were I now to begin againe (unlesse some others would joyne with mee) possibly I might struggle long to little purpose and at last be forced to accept of the same conditions, to avoyd a greater mischeife. For those that are now in power take it very ill, and will not allow that the least of there commands should bee disputed by any, much lesse by so inconsiderable a person as Madame, Your humblest servant, R. V.'

Oct 15,
1655.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE MAJOR-GENERALS AND THE SQUIRES.

1655-1657.

SIR RALPH'S satisfaction in his release from imprisonment was soon clouded by fresh anxieties. The year 1655 had seen Cromwell's protest and Milton's sonnet on behalf of the persecuted Piedmontese; all Europe recognised the power of the Lord Protector to defend English and Protestant interests abroad; the commercial and industrial classes at home were prosperous and, on the whole, contented: but in these triumphant days of the great Puritan's rule the little world pictured in the Verney letters was plunged in sadness. It was a world of 'poor unknown Royalist squires,' as Carlyle terms them, and of other squires by no means Royalist, who vainly tried to remain 'unknown' to the Major-Generals, 'Cromwell's Mastiffs,' who had fastened on their estates. The dismal words, composition, compurgation, decimation, sequestration (as uncouth and un-English in sound as in political import), appear constantly in the letters, and the squires shuddered to be reminded that they had been classed as Malignants, Delinquents, Compounders, or at the best as 'Disaffected Only.'

These troubles were the more bitterly felt because the country gentlemen were just beginning to breathe again after the long fierce strife of the Civil War. Some had ventured to return home after years of exile; many country houses like Wroxall, Lamport, and Claydon were being repaired and beautified, and old debts paid off, when the landowners were suddenly overwhelmed with fresh exac-

tions. 'Of all mine acquaintance, there is scarce an honest man that is not in a borrowing condition,' writes Sir Ralph.

An act of kindness greatly cheered his own return home. A servant arrived with a beautiful roan mare (such as Sir Ralph would never have purchased for his own riding) and a note from Aunt Sherard 'because . . . you should be well mounted to bring you throoe the Deepe waies, I have presented you with this maier, being confident shee will carry you iseylic, shee is to be rid in a bit, for elce her metell is such as shee will goe tow fast for your grave pas . . . let your servants have a caier of the maier after watering, for elce shee may run awaie with them.' 'Yeasterday you surprised mee strangly,' he replies, 'with such a greate, and unexpected present, that I know not what to say, if any thing could possibly make me a jocky, certainly you have taken the way to doe it, I finde it already a little coming uppon me, for (though I never was on Horseback since y^e middle of June, yet) I am soe in love with this maire, that I am now growne almost weary of my coach, and choose to ride on her to Hillesdon presently; perhaps she may put me into such a gadding humour, that you (and all the rest of my friends & acquaintance) may have just cause to repent your Bounty.' 'I am most hartleyli glad as the maier pleseth you,' writes Aunt Sherard; 'I toocke it uppon trust, for I have noe seill in horsis my selfe. All y^e newes I have to relat to you is that yo^r old acquaintance that toocke you prison'r is to be in this country to tacke y^e bondes of all the jhentrey in the cuntray that thay acket not against my lord protector. The cavaleres aier to give 5,000 pond bond, and A 100 pond bond for every servant thay keepe, this is y^e newes of ower cuntry, and we expecte ower mastor her on Munday next, but he stais not above a wicke in thes partes, you see my Lord protector can scecewer himselfe—I like him well.'

'If my nagg come to you whilst at home,' Dr. Denton writes, 'I pray see him goe uppon his pace, if this storme hold, a long-eared asse may serve my turne.' Sir Justinian hopes that Sir Ralph 'will vouchsafo him some stay at Lamporl,' 'where you may see what the want of my

Oct 29,
1655.Nov. 1,
1655.Nov. 5,
1655.Nov. 10,
1655.Nov. 2,
1655.

presence hath now necessitated me to in very ill season, my house not yet all covered nor yet, I assure you so open as you shall ever find the heart of Sir, Your affectionate friend to serve you'

Nov. 10,
1655

Sir Justinian is worried with 'new bonds indeterminable & in greater summs offered even to them who had given others formerly at Lond' as also single bonds for the good behaviour of servants, noe particulars of the estates to be received before the bonds were signed, & they to be signed forthwith, or els imprisonment & sequestration to follow immediately.' This letter is signed for greater safety—'yours Archibave Freeze & Cornice.'

Nov. 17,
1655.

Dr. Denton is running about the town in Sir Ralph's interest, but can see neither Colonel Cooke, 'whom I hunted dry foot,' nor Lord Fleetwood. His advice to Sir Ralph is 'to appeare when summoned & I thinke best to deliver noe particular, but crave leave to appeale to my L^d or his councell or to both, for though you claime noe Articles, nor have any need of any act of oblivion (you are of my L^d Cooke's mind to refuse noe pardon that God & his kinge would give him) yett y^e claim by a law paramount to them, which is y^e innocency, as havinge never been a Delinq^t etc. they told S^r Jo: Mounson [the elder brother of the Doctor's friend in the Fleet] that they came not to dispute etc. & he refusinge to submitt, they quartered 50 horse on him, with a menace of 500 more in case he did not submitt within 8 daies, which he not doinge, they did not send 500 horse but sequestred him. . . . I heare y^e 10th is to be a perpetuall revenue, maugre all intayles & settle^{nts}, & that Sequestration & Delinquency shall not be the only standard, but Dissaffection shall in due time have its place, & inquiry is made after the estates of such as died Delinquents unsequestred, as Earle of Sunderland etc., & of Disaffected Only, as Mr. Darcy etc.'

Aug 28,
1655

Mr. Cordell had consulted Sir Ralph as to whether he might venture to return to England with Robert Cotton, 'though known to bear a Royalist name.' Sir Ralph thought that he might, 'see that you keepe noe mallignant

Company . . . but Sir mistake me not, for I doe not thinke you can with safety come to London, by reason of the Protector's late Proclamation which prohibits all that have adhered to the late King, or his party from being here, or within twenty miles till the 20th October next, and unless they have speціаль license, or are under restraint, or in eminent danger of death, or that London bee their usuall habitation. Now Sir, though you never did act anything, yet how farre the word "adhered" will be interpreted to extend, I dare not take upon me to determine, but Sir, Claydon is 40 miles from hence, & whether I am there or not, you shall bee sure to bee welcome. . . . Mr Cotton is out of all danger for when he went from home, hee was not old enough to adhere to any side. Your company may possibly draw him unto my house & that would be a double favour.' Mr. Cordell, however, upon this report decided to remain abroad, especially as Sir Ralph had procured him a fresh pupil, John, son of Sir Orlando Bridgeman. A few months later Sir Ralph was shocked to receive the following letter from the young man: 'Sir, I make no question but you will be as much surprized as I have been perplexed with the sudd and unexpected newse of the death of my deare friend Mr. Cordell, who immediately upon his coming to Paris fell sicke, and dyed in lesse then 10 dayes, it beeing now about 3 weekes since this suddaine & unfortunate accident happened, which hath soe troubled mee that I could not recollect my selfe sooner, to give you timelier notice of it.' Sir Ralph, writing in December 1653, alluded to 'the sad accident which befell Mons^r Du Val which caused his death,' so of the trio of Sir Ralph's friends who had met at Blois, Cousin Goe alone survived.

Dec 10,
1655.

Dismal letters come in from various other counties. Cary writes from Hampshire: 'Major [General] Goff hath bin in thes parts this day fortnight, and continues here; all I heare he hath yet don is to send for all sequestred persons, and Rome catholicks, and that they must pay the tenth part tord the maintenance of an army besides thor usuall contrabution, but as yet nothing is settled, what more

Dec. 4,
1655.

he may due as yet we know not, only ther is a flying report that ther must be no more sherifes but the truth I cannot tell.'

Dec. 10,
1655.

Sir Roger, who does not despair of having his friend's company at 'Pie-tide,' tells him of the proceedings in Warwickshire. 'The grand commissioner is come to these parts, and convented before him the principall gentry of o^r County that have either been sequestred, or sequestrable, though they escaped the hands of the Coⁿstitute.' Sir Thomas Lee and Sir Francis Willoughby have suffered much, Sir Clement Fisher tries to escape though sequestered, amongst those who have later manifested their good will to the Commonwealth. 'S^t George Devoreux though not sequestred, being charged for sending in two horses, pleaded that his unruly sonne tooke them out of his stable without his knowledge or consent, and went to the Kinge with them, this reprieved him for the present however, & was dismiss'd upon it.'

It is a sad Christmas. Henry is doleful, these are no days for 'progresses of pleasure.' 'How to dispose of my-selle I know not, for if proclamations march forth thus thick, and all sports put downe, & the gentrey not permitted to meete, I am suer my fortune will be to break.' There were many better men than Henry Verney who held the same opinion. The Doctor made a brave show of cheerfulness. Sir Ralph had sent up some additions to their Christmas fare. 'I have very good skill in Buns,' he wrote, 'and when I have tasted them, you shall have the doctor's opinion of them. . . . Kate says you are very quaint, & yet but a scrubbed K^t, she doubts you want a Bun your selfe you are so waggish. Mall saies you are a cheatinge K^t for sending 4 puddings short of what you write.'

'Claydon loves not Christmas,' writes Sir Ralph, 'wee are all Roundheades on that point to save charges, w^{ch} is now more allowable being threatened with such new & greato Impositions, meere necessity will force us to bee strangely thrifty: were I somewhat younger I would binde my selfe

Apprentice to old Audley [the miser], for I know not an abler inaster to teach mee to bee provident.'

Sir Roger writes on Christmas Eve: 'I understood by yours of the 17th that you were then at Claydon, but to prevent suspition of superstition you intended very suddenly to remove, but you tell me not whither, but I suppose not far unless hither, least the Abbattess of Wroxall send a bull to excommunicate you. . . . The Major Generall is, as I heare, gon out of our County & I presume hath left his directions to be observed by the Commissioners. . . . I pray let me hear how you have disposed of yourself this Xmas, its possible I may hold it as superstitious to keep it next yeare as you doe this'

Tom, in 'weather so piercing cold,' and 'with fingers so nummed' that he can hardly write, is the only one who goes through the form of wishing Sir Ralph 'a merry, happy, & joyfull Christmas.' 'Had things fell out as I once expected, this blessed time might have proved somewhat fortunate to mee.' And there is a piteous whine for 'a small augmentation' of his quarter, long since forestalled

Henry is at Wolverton, and proposes to Sir Ralph to dine with him there. He replies from Claydon that he would willingly have done it 'uppon the score of kindred' on his way from town, 'but I thought you had known me better then to imagen (that without greate & pressinge businesse) my old and lazy bones (in these short daies & ill waies) could goe from hence to Wolverton & dine & chat, and return back heather in a day.'

Dr. Denton writes from town: 'On Munday last 2 prisoners walking with there soldat in the springe garden, endeavored to bribe him, but not prevaylinge, went to bind him, which not succeedinge they shot him, some say with his owne musquett, others with a pockett pistoll. This hath occasioned all prisoners to be called to there quarters, & some say they will suddenly be tried for there lives.' He writes again: 'There is a Committee of 4, viz: Lambert, Fleetwood, Mulgrave, Jones, appointed to consider what prisoners are fittest to be released, but they have not yett

Jan. 19,
1656.

Jan. 24,
1656.

Jan. 31,
1656.

sate. The souldier that was wounded in Springe garden by the 3 prisoners is dead, & he that killed him is in the dungeon, & the others are prisoners & are all to be tued for theire lives—dy sure enough [will] one or more.'

Sir Ralph wishes to spend the spring in safe obscurity at Claydon, and Sir Roger writes hoping that he may remain 'a fixed starr' in his own region. 'I perceive you are shortly in expectation of a visitt from a person of quality: I shall longe to heare that it is well over.'

'You doe not heare that I am sent for to Alsbery,' Sir Ralph writes to Roades, 'for if you did, you would certainly send a messenger to me with the summons, or a copy of it. But I trust in God they will let me Rest in quiet.' There is a rumour of a warrant out against him, but perchance 'tis but a Fable' Sir Ralph's fears, however, are soon confirmed. He receives a list of forty persons summoned to appear before the 'person of quality' to whom Sir Roger referred, in which his own name appears; and a second list of the Bucks Commissioners sitting with Lord Fleetwood the Major-General, or in his absence with 'Major Packer,' as Chairman of the Court.

Dec. 1655.

It is sufficient to read the two lists, in which the gentlemen of a county are pitted against each other, one set as judges and the other as delinquents, to understand the irritation caused by the formation of such tribunals. Dr. Denton, writing to Sir Ralph of an action he has brought before Quarter Sessions, advises him 'to end it to-night before to-morrow if possible, & before any Major Generalls appeare in your Quarters . . . for I believe many of your Justices will be coadjutors & informers. Verbum sapienti suf.'

March 7,
1656.

Sir Ralph applied to the clerk of the former Sequestration Committee, and received a certificate 'that it doth not appeare (neither is there) any charge of Delinquency, Sequestration or otherwise against the said Sir Ralph Verney.' He also obtained from the Haberdashers' Hall a note of the proceedings formerly instituted against him, and the sub-

sequent entry 'at the Committee for the County of Bucks sitting at Aylsbury the 29th of May 1647. . . That the estate of Sir Ralph Verney was the 5th of January then last discharged of Sequestration by order of the Committee of Lords & Commons.' He had also 'a note for the horses given by him, as a voluntary contribution to the Parliamentary Army, during the Civil War.' Thus fortified, Sir Ralph appealed to Cromwell. The Doctor was of opinion that the petition would avail little. 'Favour goes further than arguments.' Cousin Smith helped Sir Ralph in drafting his petition, but he did not succeed in saving his own fortune from decimation.

March 11,
1656.

It would have comforted the poor Bucks squires who rode away from 'the George in Aylesbury' on that black Friday with such unpleasant documents buttoned under their riding-coats, could they have foreseen how soon the power of the Major-Generals was to be swept away.

Meanwhile 'the said Tax,' imposed with such extreme precision, had to be met at once. Squire Smith's hospitalities ever tended to exceed his income; and, with his stables full of horses, and an increasing number of little heads in the nursery upstairs, he and his wife must have spent an anxious evening over ways and means, after his twenty-miles' ride home. Sir Ralph resented the injustice of being taxed as a malignant quite as much as the financial loss.

Mun, who is ever 'a very ill manager of his affairs,' has spent the money sent him for his journey home, and asks for more: 'I am now in very great trouble,' replies his father, 'and in danger to loose the Tenth part of my Estate, & if I deliver not in a perticuler of my Estate reall & personall on Thursday next, they will sequester me. This puts me to an appeale to the Protector & Councell, which is not only very chargeable to follow, but the succeesse soe Hazardous, that I know not which way to turne me. I am now givinge over Housekeeping, and discharging the most part of my Workmen that were building and fiting upp my

March 4,
1656

House, & I shall lessen my Family all I can, to put me in a capacity to pay my deare Father's Debts; which I see (by your expenses) you consider soe little, that I am resolved to consider them the more. . . . I should have been glad to have seene you contract your expenses into a narrower compasse. . . . I shall now bee silent, & begg of God to direct us both for the best. Adieu. . . . The Pacquet Boate from Dunkerke to Dover, is much the shortest Passage, but take heed then of bringing anything more with you then the cloathes uppon your Back, & those the Worst you have, for tis reported the passengers (by reason of our Warre with Spaine) are often pillaged. . . . God blesse you in your journey & grant us a good meeting, & make you happier then your most affectionate father.'

March 21,
1656.

Dr. Denton writes: 'Deare Raph, I doe not thinke to make use of any Privy Councillor or any eminent person (who doe not love to be too much troubled) for my owne selfe, but will reserve them to spend their shott for somebody else. I have little crotchets in my noddle & I will first try what they will doe. You will want Sir R[ichard] T[emple] to bringe you to the little officers, & to acquaint you with some little waies.'

March 17,
1656

Sir Roger wonders 'how any can possibly wind themselves into an estate that hath so much innocency to protect it, but my hopes are that your feares are more than your dainger . . . trouble not your self, for an appeal to my Lord Protector, so noble & upright a person, I question not but will free you from such high inconveniences.' Some of the agencies Dr. Denton alluded to were set in motion, but the 'eminent person,' Thomas Sandford, a cousin of Charles, 'Lord Fleetwood,' who was induced to write to one of the Bucks Commissioners was a good deal more anxious not to compromise himself, than to help on Sir Ralph's petition.

March 20,
1656.

Sir Ralph 'in greate perplexitie' went down to Aylesbury; the Protector had referred his petition back to the Bucks Committee, and he had prepared the 'perticular' of his property in case he should not get a reprieve. He returns his estate at Middle Claydon as worth about 711*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

yearly, but states 'that a greate part of it being in his owne hands, & other parts being never let neither by himselfe nor his Father but alwaies managed by a Bayliffe, he cannot set downe the yearly rent exactly' There are only '4 Dairry Cowes', but there are '13 draught Bullocks; a coach and 2 coach horses, 3 Saddle Horses, 6 young steres, 1 yearling calfe; Wood, Hay, Peate & some Timber brought to be used about his house, worth about 150*l.*, his household goods his servants estimate about 300*l.*, but his debts amount to ten times more than this money.' He mentions some 'small Rents at Mursley, besides a cottage or two that never paid any Rent.'

He writes to Dr. Denton from Aylesbury an account of his long and harassing day before the commissioners, when he argued his own case. 'Deare Dr, I followed your directions & pressed all that could bee for a rehearing, soe they bid me withdraw, but being called in againe, they told me plainly though there were new matter, it lay not in their power to relieve mee, for they had only authority to charge all that were sequestered, not to acquitt them; they were not judges whether I was justly sequestered or not, that belonged only to the protector & his counsell, & therefore they desired my perticuler. Then I acquainted them with the reference from the protector, & pressed hard for a suspension, soe they bid me withdraw againe, they told mee they would certify but they would not suspend, but they would give me till their next meeting (which would be about 3 weekes hence) to pay in my money, & if in the interim I could be discharged, they would be well pleased. Then I pressed very hard againe for a suspension, & lett them see how much harder it was to get a decimation [taken off] then to keep my selfe from being decimated. But when I saw there was no remedy, I desired that my name might not be entered into any of their bookes, nor any of their proceedings against me, for twas not the money I stood upon, but the mark of delinquency. Soe they bid me withdraw againe, & being called in they told [me] they would comply with mee in that, & cause the clerk only to take short noates of all that

concerned mee, but not to enter it in any booke, till my Lord Protector's pleasure were knowne upon my petition. I urged that 'twas unlikely I should gett an answer before the time of payment of my money, & if it were entred into the Treasurer's booke, it would bee an evidence against mee, soe they told mee it should not be entred into any booke, though it were paid. Upon this I give them a perticuler which was read, & being appointed to withdraw the 4th time, they called me in againe & asked mee how & when those rent-charges & reversions were settled. I replied by my oncle Sir Francis, by my father many yeares since, & some by my selfe, soe they told mee if I did not gett the discharge, I must pay the Tenth, for what was mentioned to be in possession, which I gave in at 722*l.* 0*s.* 9*d.* per annum, & they told mee they would passe by that which was in reversion, & my personal estate also which I valued in all at 450*l.*'

It would seem by this account that the gentlemen to whom this ungracious and difficult work was given took some trouble to carry it out with patience and fairness, so far as their instructions allowed them. Sir Ralph thereupon drafted a second petition to Cromwell, which he sent in with a certificate, signed by seven of the Bucks Commissioners, that they found he had been formerly released from sequestration 'by a Committee of both Houses of Parliament,' and the final decision as to the decimation was again referred to his Highness.

William Roades, who knew better than any one how fiercely the Royalists had resented Sir Ralph's action in the past, wrote the following memorandum for Dr. Denton: 'Sir, My master Sir Raph Verney has had very hard measure, first to have his father slaine in the late Kinges service, and after that great losse, to suffer so much by the Kinges soldiers. For first prince Morris' soldiers did discharge farmer Francis Tuckwell and the rest of his tenants at Tingwick in Buckingham in the year 1643, to pay him no more Rent, but pay it to them, and plundered the tenant, & threatened him so much, as he was faine to leave his hous

because he was my masters tenant ; and in the yeare 1644, Sir Iuoe dives [Sir Lewis Dives] who was governor of Abindon, feld as many elms of his there as was near worth fower score pound, and I hearing of went to Abindon, and the governor tok me prisoner, & told me he had my Masters Rents asigned to him, and charged me not to borow a peny of them ; and in the year 1645 Sir William Campion, governor at Borstall, feld his trees in his grounds to the value of twentie ponds, and feched divers of tenant, horses and cartes from claydon, and when I did goe in hopes to redeeme them, they told me if they had my master they would slater him, for he was worse then those slaine beasts, for he holp to slay his own father ; and in the said year 1645 they came to my house, took away my horses, & shot one of my children, and when I went for Recompense, they told me it were no mater if I were hanged for serving such a master, and threatened to kill me, and at Cromarsh in Oxfordsheare they feld most of his trees, and at Efield at least fiftie ponds worth of elmes to mend their garison at Wallingford in the year 1644, and said if my master were there, they would cut & fell him as they did the trees : and about that tim those tenants sent their horses to claydon in hopes of saftie, and the lord Birone tuck them all away, and I went after him for them, and they told me my Master was a Rebell and wood not her me speak. Those horses were well worth near a hundred ponds. Sir, these be sad storeys to relat to you, but being he is lick to suffer on the contrary sid, which I kno him innocent in, and for him to suffer for suffering such hard mesure before—I will leave you to judge of his cause and pray to God to relese him, which is the hartie desire of your humble sarvant Will : Roades.

‘ Sir if all these partickulars were made knon to the lords of the counsell I doe fully assur my self they would not let my master suffer by a Decimation, for all these partickulars are treue above mentioned.’ A formal affidavit was afterwards signed by Roades, in which he told of a second visit to his house, when ‘his stable & Lodging Roomes were pulled downe,’ and of the expense his master had incurred in repairing

them, and he quotes another of the brutal Royalist jokes, that rankled in the memory of the sufferers for years after; when at Claydon the soldiers drove away the poor people's cattle, and he went 'to intreate for them, they told him if his Master were boyled as the beefe, it were noe matter.'

April 25,
1658.

Mun is on his way home; Dr. Morley's son is travelling with him from the Hague. '*Mon âme se repaist de plaisantes fantaisies par l'espoir de jouir bientost de vostre veue.*' He arrived on the 8th of May; Sir Ralph, with nervous caution, desired him to conceal his lodging, and sent his letters to 'Mr. Webster, a haberdasher.' The Doctor laughed at 'a secret now generally knowne,' for Mun had run up against 'my Lord Sherard's man, who knew him in Holland, and Sir Ralph went up to town to meet him.'

Mrs. Westerholt got ready 'the orange chamber and the closett' for their return home; 'and if I had but sope that I might Wash,' she wrote, 'I woulde, when that were done, wish your worship at Claidon with all my heart.' This dearth of household stores, the result of Sir Ralph's virtuous retrenchments after the decimation, would have confirmed Doll Leeke in her oft-expressed opinion, that a man could never manage his own housekeeping. The sugar he had sent down was 'fitter to spende in the house, then to preserve with,' and the housekeeper was fain 'humbly to desire your worshipp to buy any powder sugar for preserving that may be very white, otherwise I shal have noe credit by doeing any fruite with it, nor your worshipp be pleasd in seeing it come to your table.' She is almost without currants and raisins, and the glasses sent down for preserving are too expensive and not suitable for the 'chery marmalad.' She wants 'glasses without brims, being they are not sent to the table, & those are not soe soone broke, I desire to have 2 dozen of them.' Mrs. Westerholt was hard to please in this matter. Doctor writes: 'Nor Sis. Sherard, nor wife, nor Elins nor glassman could understand y^r patterne for y^r glassses, so yⁿ are to find out a new project.'

Though Sir Ralph told Mun that he was stopping all his building, he had previously ordered 150,000 bricks to be

made for him ; and it was impossible at once to discharge his workmen. They gave the careful housekeeper a good deal of trouble in his absence. She had just sent off to Sir Ralph a lordly pasty, containing three dozen and five pigeons, and she took the opportunity of airing her woes. ' Sir, this last week cam Pursell the carpenter and his men, he only him-
June 9,
1656.
selfe sate in the house, but all his men come in for their beere, and that not seldom nor in small proportions ; and by theire example all the workmen doe soe worry me for drinke, that though I many times anger them, and hourly vex myselfe, with deniing one or other of them, yet wee spend a great deale of beer—three barells the last weeke. Sir, I beseech you be pleased to let me know your will, whether they shall have it still or noe, for I am very loath, alonge with the trouble that I have with them, to have that of the feare of youre displeasure. I wish with all my heart that your Worshippes businesse woulde permit your presence here. Sir, I received a note to have Ralph Roads look to the gutters, I have spoke to him, and hee will doe it, but it did not raine in at all, the last time, of raine.'

While Sir Ralph's fate still hung in the balance, and he was ' daily haunting the council,' the steward discovered, to his horror, that a serpent lurked amongst Sir Ralph's apple trees. His own gardener was telling stories against him, which were already the subject of village gossip, and might readily spread to Aylesbury.

The origin of the gardener's discontent was a true Briton's dislike of a foreign fellow-servant, whom he wrongly supposed to be a Papist. Roades writes how ' he fell upon Misho . . .
June 14,
1656.
& had killed him . . . had he not been reskewed. Misho he tells me that Jayn and Mrs. Aris' mayd and the gardener did take a lader that Misho has to tie the aples, & put one part of one sid, and one part on the other sid the pailes, and so went over, as they pretended to look after a turkey's nest, but it was at night and Misho in the hous, and they did not aske him for the Key of the gate, but he comming in with his gun found them there, but his gun was not charged, but Misho told the gardener he did ill to goe over the pailes

with that lader to teach people to doe so, but might as well have asked for the key, and then the gardener told him he had more to do ther then he had : and pressently puld him by the haire and scratched his face, and by report, beat him very much, took away his gun and told him you . . . did contrary to the lord protectors order, and when I told him if he weere afrayde of Misho, he might a kep the gun in his chamber or gave it Mr^s Westerholt or my self, he told me you would not anser the keeping of it in your hous, and as for using of you ill in words, I hear it is his continuall talke, dronck or sober, before and sence : that you kept your son apurpos in holand he cause you might the better send money to your son as he might send it to the prince, which he sais he can prove ; and that you kep papisis in your hous, and keep showlibord playing and nin pins with other games in your house on Sondaies contrary to order, and this he will justifie. Mrs. Westerholt tells me as well as John Andrewes, and my son Miller . . . it is the whole towne talke I veryly beleeve he is a very dangerus fellow and cares not to tell a lie nether doth he fear an oath. I need not tell you what to saie to him but I beleeve good wordes will be best for the anger of such a felow is lick the radging of a mad dogg that cares not how he bits nor who. This morning being sondaie I went and spoak with him and told him you send to me to tell him you would have him com up to london to you . . . I told him I would bespeak a place in the waggon but he told me he would not goe to you, he knew you ware angry with him, but he cared not for it, and that you hiered him to doe his sarvice in the contrie and if you had anything to saie to him you might send to him your mind as well as send for him or stay tell you com downe. I told him my busines was most in the contrie but yf you sent for me I should goe without disput and then he told me . . . with divers idle words he thought it was to part with him, he told me he had been with you a quarter of a year and yf you turned him of you should pay him for half a year and that no sarvant of yours should pay him for he scorned to receve his wages from any hand

but yours. Alas poore man I pray god give him grace with humilitie.'

Mrs. Westerholt further reports that the gardener threatened the woman at the village public-house when she refused him drink, that 'she shoulde not sell ale long, & though she thought Sir Ralph Verney would uphold her, *hee* (which was all the title he bestowed) should have enough to do to save himselfe.' This report annoyed and alarmed Sir Ralph extremely. It was important that his son should appear with him to disprove any possible complicity with Royalist plots at the Hague, if questions were asked by the Commissioners. Mun, meanwhile, heedlessly intent on his own diversions, wrote to his father that 'having by good fortune met with an old acquaintance of mine, one Mr. Hayre, Sir Ralph Hayre his brother, I could not denye the accompanying of him into Norfick,' and vanished for some days, leaving no address. The gardener, however, went away quietly. Roades gave him 1*l*. more than his due, and the parish clerk undertook to water the flowers and 'turf the court.' Sir Ralph heard from Ball, the nurseryman, of another man 'most Eminent of any about, for neat houses, Mellons, Sparragus and Colyflowr, & all other ordenary things, tho' for graftinge he hath not much judgm^t.' His wages are not stated, but Mrs. Elin Tippinge gives us some notion of what they would be, as her young gardener 'is tempted by great Squire Lea of Hartwell for 16*l*. a year, and he hath even given us the go-by, & put me in much wrath, for I had gotten many laborers & thought to have made my garden so fin, & I am now defeatedt.'

Sir Ralph's affairs are going badly. After some six or seven weeks' delay, 'the Protector & Councell' deliver him over once more to the tender mercies of the Major-General and the County Commissioners. He writes to Lady Gawdy: July 8, 1658
'I am this day going downe uppon the businesse of my Decimation, but with soe little hopes of good successe, that were not Alisbery soe very neare to Claydon, I should scarce goe thether about it, unlesse it were to give an oppertunity to the Major Generall & Comissioners to make their injustice

shine more cleaily, which you may guesse to bee a needlesse errand being most men are already fully satisfied in that point. The coachman storms & vowes hee cannot staye a minute longer,' and so Sir Ralph's complimentary ending is perforce cut short.

Some alternative having been given him which he was unable to accept, the decimation was finally confirmed; and he was forbidden to come to town for six months. 'It is as well a marke of your virtue as of your misfortune,' writes Lady Gawdy, 'and such as are so accompanied with honour may bee received with les regret.'

Aug. 15,
1656.

Public interest now centred in the coming Parliament, which would either confirm or destroy the authority of the Major-Generals. Dr. Denton writes from Overton, Cheshire, where he is visiting the Alports: 'Here is a new Major Generall come downe, his name is Bridges, & I heere, labours to have a great influence upon elections, & that he hath laid a good foundation to his minde in Staffordshire as he passed. Its thought he will misse of his ayme however. There is like to be strong & stout canvassing. The sheriff & justices at the last sessions pitched on 4, to which they will unanimously adhere. Sir Wm. Brereton he stands on his owne leggs & labours might & maine, & the Major he intends to prefer others. Bradshaw writt not to be nominated nor chosen. Steel was in nomination, but hearinge he is designed for Ireland he is laid by. . . . The High Sheriffe hath beene here these 2 daies, & we goe to his house on tuesday sennight, the knight will be chosen on Wenesday next & then you shall heare more. I heare Roles & Barcklay "the last of the old judges" are both dead. Here hath beene a strange rumor of the securinge of Vane, Bradshaw, Ludlow & others, but noe certainty, a little newes doth well here. All to all Vale, Yours Wm. D.' He has seen a mountain ash for the first time. 'Here is a fine wild ash (which the South yeelds not) which beareth red berries (now ripe & last longe on the trees) as pleasant to looke uppon as cherries trees, only the fruit little bigger then hawes, the usuall ornament of flower potts & windowes

of these parts. I am promised setts of som; if I can gett them I will send som to old Raph the Provider General.'

In September Sir Roger writes from London of the new House of Commons that 'some were for the taking in peices the whole body of the law.'

Sept. 6,
1656.

Penelope writes from Oxfordshire. 'There is such breaking up of houses and binding the people in there beads that a maid Sarvant as usally did ly in my hous will not stay in it when I have Fawler, and I ever had a man that lay in the hous bysids, but that will not satisfy them the time to com.'

Sept
1656

Sir Ralph had also been visited. 'My house was lately searched by a captaine and 12 Troopers who obeyed theire orders but I must needs say with civility enough.' Lady Gawdy has not 'bine yett so much considerd as to have such potent viseters, & she hopes they may never return to his prejudice.'

Sept 29,
1656

Sir Ralph took his decimation sadly to heart, and he was troubled by an eruption on his leg and thigh which would not heal. He was deluged with advice by his lady friends. Doll wished him to drink asses' milk while he sat in a bath of it up to the neck, for two hours twice a day; a less tedious remedy is a lotion 'so violant a drop would fech of the skin wher it touched'; and a dreadful old woman is recommended who has an infallible 'oyntment for yumurs.' He wants to go to town to petition the House, but his friends think that 'it is not safe for the foxe to come to the Court.'

Sir Roger amidst the 'continual vexations' of the session wishes Sir Ralph 'all the happiness that a Country life may afforde, and that I know by experience to surpass all that this Citty can give'; but rural life had its own peculiar crosses. Sir Ralph presents his 'service to Mr Frem: Gaudy; for his better encouragement in Planting tell him this last weeke one villanous Cow in one night spoyled my whole Nursery; in earnest I had rather have given ten pounds, soe greate a fondnesse of these Trifles bath Yours etc. etc. R. V.'

Nov. 21.
1656.

Uncle and Aunt Isham have been staying at Claydon, and Sir Ralph is visiting Edmund Denton.

Dec. 8,
1656.

Dec. 29,
1656

The Doctor has his joke about the Decimation Bill which the friends of the Government pushed on while their opponents were spending Christmas with their families. 'Decimaçon had but a poore Xtmas dinner no sweet plum broth nor plum pye, for they chose that day to bring it in when armiger was in patinis, & soe it gott the liberty to be entertained [by] the house, though Glyn yet spake stoutly agst it but was outvoted by 20^{ty} voices, if the house fill, much good may be hoped for, if not, actum est.'

Dec 10,
1656.

Doll Leeke writes: 'I fancied you might have come this crismus but you have so totally forgot it that you do not compliment us so much as to wish your self with us. I wold be a littell severe but that I wold have you beleve that I have altred that part of my nature, and have resolved to be all my life kind, for now I am so ould ther is no dainger in profising it.' Moll Cape thanks him for a chine 'variety maketh pleasure & therefore your cold one is so well accepted.'

Feb. 26,
1657.

Sir Roger continues to report the progress of the long debate. 'Tomorrow a fast is appointed to be kept, wher the prayers but not advise of 5 Ministers are desired, for they are not to preach but pray. The men are to be—Owen: Manton: Caroll: Nye and Gelaspie a Scotchman. thus much for newes, for the great feast & banquet with which the Parl^t was most sumptuously entertained at Whitehall on fryday last, I know the whole kingdome almost rings of it.' 'The bill for Kingship goes on,' Dr. Denton writes, 'notwithstanding Lambert is highly against it, not without some passion, others say peevishness; Wolseley & Fiennes for it.'

Feb. 26,
1657.

March 12,
1657.

Sir Roger continues his report: 'As for the Major Gen^{ls} if they were wounded it was thorow the sides of Decimation, the bowells wherof were peirced by a Negative vote of the par^{lt}: viz: that the bill which was brought in to confirme that peice of Tyranny should not be so much as comitted, and positively rejected. The Major Gen. were not so much as named, but sublatâ causâ you know what followed. I suppose that the 6 mounths banishment is now expired

. . . and that ther shall be another house to give check to this I presume you are not ignorant, the Maj. Gen: are as like Lambs upon this account as they were Lyons upon the other, for they expect some amends by this, expecting to be in the number of those that shall be elected Lords by the L^d Prot. for that house Diverse of the Courtiers are pleased to absent themselves from the parl^t upon this occasion, for they are ashamed some of them to appeare for that cause against which they have been formerly so violent.'

Sir Ralph had no lack of congratulations, and we can almost hear Moll Gape's loud voice as she leant over the apothecary's shoulder and dictated her hearty message: 'Molly rejoyceth that the sixe months are expiring, and doubly rejoyceth because shee shall then see S^t Ralph, all of him, his whole tenne parts reunited, not a collop left behinde to feede y^r Dawes, yett shee doth not wish that what they have already may choake them & therein disagrees from S^t, Y^r true servant, W^m Gape.'

And thus Cromwell's military tribunals were suddenly swept away. It is impossible to read the detailed accounts of the vexation and expense they brought upon individuals, uniting men of such opposite politics as Sir Justinian Isham and Sir Ralph Verney by a common grievance, without realising how much they did, in a Puritan county like Bucks, to reconcile the country squires on the Parliamentary side to a Stuart restoration. There were few indeed who would not have joined with Thomas Stafford, when he made it his 'dayly petition to our heavenly Father, and gracious protector' that He would grant us 'a speedy deliverance out of the power of the Major Generalls, and restore us to the protection of the common law.'

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MUN AND HIS LOVE-MAKING.

1656-1660

IN May 1656 Edmund Verney returned home, a young man in his twentieth year. He was tall and handsome, but somewhat clumsily and heavily built, and his awkwardness of manner and slovenliness of dress were a great trouble to his precise and gentlemanlike father. 'Much more will be expected from Mun,' he writes, 'than from such youths as have gonn noe father then Oxford or Cambridg, or at most the Inns of Court'

Never had Mary been more sadly missed than in this fresh chapter of the family life, when Sir Ralph had to make a home and a career for his eldest son. No one welcomed him back with the womanly love which mother and sister would have lavished upon him, no one was there to see that in taking a son's place at Claydon his habits did not clash with his father's; and so the home-coming was not as successful as it might have been, after the joy of the first meetings and greetings had subsided. Sir Ralph himself had been an ideal son, never thinking of his own amusements if he could share in Sir Edmund's duties and lighten his cares. Edmund arrived in the midst of the worries and vexations of the Decimation, but it did not occur to him that these things were any concern of his. He looked upon himself as the heir to a fine estate, and he felt annoyed when every request for money was met with a dismal recital of his grandfather's debts and his father's burdens. Careless of expense, and ignorant of business, Mun was far from appreciating the sacrifices Sir Ralph had made for his education,



EDMUND VERNEY, ELDEST SON OF SIR RALPH VERNEY

in the days of his greatest poverty, or how hardly he now raised the 20*l.* or 50*l.* which slipped through the son's fingers so easily.

Sir Ralph was full of large schemes for the improvement of Claydon, in which Mun took but little interest, thinking, not unnaturally, that with less outlay in building and planting, his father might afford to give him a proper allowance, that he might appear as well dressed, and as well mounted, as the other young sparks who splashed up the mud at a fashionable hour in Hyde Park.

Sir Ralph justified himself as a father and landowner always does under these conditions. 'As for my buildings, Dec 8,
I see I have already lost one great part of the contentment 1656.
I tooke in them, which was that you should perceive that what money I did expend, was layd out *to your advantage*, to make the house more handsome and convenient for you and yours . . . I must confesse I shall not debarre myselve of any expence that I thinke moderate, to supply any extravagancies that you either have or shall commit, and yet, if any misfortune should befall you, noe man liveing should more readily and cheerfully suffer with and for you.'

The boy had his own vague ambitions, though he rarely confided them to Sir Ralph: 'I do positively asirme,' he wrote to his intimate friend Dr. Hyde, 'that hetherto my father hath not given me any education whereby I might be rendered accomlisht in body and mind; nay further, though I am naturally inclined to be that which the Italians call un Vertuoso, hee never did so much as countenance mee therein, but hath continually opposed me. Considering these premisses aforesaid my industrie will labour under a greate difficulty of acquiring a title above an honest elder brother, which now a dayes is accounted but little above a silly fellow, yet I think myselve capable of deserving much better, and I hope without vanitie. . . . My father is courteous and kind enough to me . . . and seemes very well pleased with mee, and would be more yet, if I could dispose my humour to affect, what I hate, Rusticq matters and

effeminate things—all which aforesaid I do contemplate with some wonder.’

The relations and friends had only one course to recommend—in every letter written to welcome the lad of nineteen home, they wished that he might soon find a wife. Sir Ralph wearily reckoning up debts and interest, portions and mortgages, decimations and taxes (till he convinced himself that he had only 125*l.* a year to live upon), saw no way out of the family labyrinth except by his son’s marriage with an heiress—maid or widow it mattered very little—but wealthy she must be, and she would, of course, be good. Of Sir Ralph’s seven children two only were living, and after them Brother Tom was heir to Claydon; it was therefore a matter of dynastic importance to the large family circle that Edmund Verney should be suitably ‘matched.’ All the uncles and aunts began to bestir themselves, and Edmund’s godmother, Lady Warwick, who in a previous stage of existence had provided him with a silver porringer and a light-blue figured satin coat, now produced a very young granddaughter with a portion, as an eligible bride. Roades was not to be left out of the chorus of wellwishers: ‘I am glad Mr. Edmund Verney is com safe to London. I pray doe me so much favour as to present my service to him. I could wish I were as Abraham’s sarvant to provide a Rebecka for him, but sence I am not worthy of such a calling, I will pray to my god to bless him with a Rebecka in nature if not in name.’ The great match-maker Aunt Sherard improves the occasion: ‘My desir is that your son may meet with a good wife and a portion answerabal to your owne desires. . . . I hope both your selfe and son hath soe much resone and religgon in you, that you will pries that which is most to be valewd, which is vertue.’

June 8
1656.

June 10,
1656.

Mun took a languid interest in these projects; ‘si je me mariois,’ he wrote, ‘ce que je n’ai pas encore envie de faire, je veux premierement voir quelques choses’; but when money was running low, marriage meant independence, as his father would be bound to make some separate provision for him, besides the promised wealth that his wife was to

bring with her. So being 'fancy free' he was ready to leave the choice of the particular heiress wholly to his father, '*mais je ne voudrois souiller mon sang, avec une creature de basse condition, pour avoir avec elle 100,000 livres de rente; j'aurois mieux chercher ma fortune par mon espée, avec une fille noble et vertueuse.*'

After spending a few months at Claydon, Mun announced his wish to live in London till he married, Sir Ralph regretted but did not oppose it, he himself was often up and down, and there were relations in town ready to be kind to his son. 'Methinks Mun lives wonderful orderly here,' the Doctor reports. 'I doe not see that any one comrade hath been with him since he came. He keeps at home all day till candle light, and then we have his company till bed time and much more free and merry then formerly.' But Sir Ralph was uneasy to hear that at Mrs Bellinger's, of the sign of the Eagle and Child (his lodgings near the Old Bailey), Mun was known by the aliases of Theodore Berry and Brewer, and that he had been heard of at Woolwich, and in Hertfordshire, when Sir Ralph had known nothing of such expeditions. The father complained that his indulgence was only abused. 'Mun, I see the same sunn that softens Wax, hardens clay, and, since tis soe (to be short with you), I shall consider you as little as you doe me'; the son retorted that he had asked for nothing unreasonable, '*mais c'est que vostre naturel est tel, que vous aimez à prolonger les choses.*'

Matters had reached this pitch, when on Christmas Day, 1656, the foolish lad wrote his father a letter 'that had been better unwritt'; Sir Ralph justly described it to be 'as false as insolent.' Deeply pained, he sent it with his answer to Dr. Denton, begging him to forward the one, and burn the other 'presently, for I would not have his folly knowne to anybody.' Dr. Denton had no weak indulgence for wrongdoing, but his sense of humour and his habitual self-command prevented his blundering into mere bursts of passion. Mun's letter was no surprise; the lad had shown it to him, when he had been pouring out his grievances. 'Being

Dec. 27,
1656.

Jan. 21,
1657

horribly wroath,' Doctor writes, 'I did tell him that it was impossible but that you should highly resent it. . . . I am thus far beholdinge to him, he heard me patiently and I think doth not take it ill from me though I spare him as little as I doe others. . . . I had a very kind letter from him last night—but maugre all his courtshipps its my business this day to study ugly bitter currish things to say to him at night, for if I understand him rightly, he is soe to be treated, and will worke more on him then great reason if contrary to his sense. Courage, Mons^r ; you may be happy togeather for all this ; it's but a peccadillo, and if you master him here he is your owne for ever.'

Dr. Denton knew that the father, though his heart ached with love and disappointment, was in danger of driving his son from him by the stern expression of his righteous displeasure. He pleaded with him to treat Mun liberally in money matters, and said all the kind and wise things he could on the lad's behalf. But Mun must have had a bad time of it when they met that night 'at a taverne.' The Doctor spoke to him plainly about his wrong courses, and pictured to him what would have happened if ever his father had dared to speak so wrongly and disrespectfully to his grandfather : 'after this rate was our discourse and yett . . . we parted very very lovingly.' Sir Ralph was not appeased ; 'for his deare mother's sake I would gladly love him but hee will not let me,' said the poor wounded father. Dr. Denton spoke to Mun again : 'We had a smart bout last night till past 11 o'clock . . . his letter to you I hope will be full of douceur with out a stinge at the tayle of it. He had as good as I could give him, and I please myselfe to thinke I was cock of him and doe beleve that now he wishes his finger had been in the fire when he writt it, yet I find it is a hard chapter to recant it.'

Edmund wrote the next day to his father : 'I am exceedingly afflicted to have said anything that hath caused your anger, wherefore if you vouchsafe to signifie the contrary by the next, you will make my hart leape for joy.'

Sir Ralph thought this a wholly inadequate apology ;

it was not his anger, but his son's misconduct that was in question. He wrote back stiffly 'When I see a submission ^{Feb. 1,} and sorrow more suited to your crime, I thank God I can ^{1657.} forgive it, though you have most highly and strangely provoked your Father. R. V'

The little folded note, marked by Sir Ralph as returned to him undelivered, lies now beside the Doctor's letter. That unwearied peace-maker was bent upon winning for Mun a freer and more gracious pardon :

'Seeing you left it to me,' he wrote, 'to keepe or deliver ^{Feb 5,} the letter, I cannot see soone forgett the Councill I gave ^{1657.} you—that if he wrote to you in such a way as that you might with Honour to Paternal dignity and power, embrace him againe without further ravelling into the story of disagreement then to doe it, and to doe it hautily, and to retaine him kindness even with London measure.' He warns his father that if he is to play 'Thomas Aquinas and distinguish nicely,' he will drive his son to justify himself. 'It is much the better way in my opinion to take every reasonable excuse to be friends without words . . . though he doth not tell mee soe, yett I know he must want money . . . he cannot live like a chamoleon, therefore let it be your glory to passe by offences and the sooner the more honorable. I have but this one touch more and I have done. Suppose you should stand uppon a submission more suitable to his crime, and he should not answere your expectation, I will not aske you what can you doe to him (for I know you may do what you will) but what will you doe to him? You cannot but suffer with him : even your makinge of it publique will be a torment to you, and to take notice of it, and not goe through stitch with it, it will be an allay to your sovereignty. Go, kisse and be friends, which is the advice of W^m D.'

One or two loving notes had arrived meanwhile from Mun, anxious about his father's continued silence. Sir Ralph was not a man to forgive or forget easily; the very steadfastness of his nature was against it: but he could sacrifice his pride and his own opinion at the bidding of so

Feb. 9,
1657.

true a friend: 'Well Dr you may doe what you will with me, and now you have a sufficient trial of it. I have written Mun another letter in another straine I have not at all touched upon the businesse, for I confesse I could not doe it without some such sharpnesse as would not please you, therefore I rather chose to let it sleepe in silence' He pours out to the Doctor all the good advice he is not allowed to give his son, to whom 'God grant more witt and grace hereafter.' To Mun himself he writes affectionately and naturally, asking after his health, and about the trees he had ordered from Holland, promising to supply him with money, and abstaining from a single word of reproach for the past or of warning for the future. Mun felt the generosity of this silence, and Sir Ralph reaped his reward. Small differences of opinion arose again at times, when their interests seemed to be conflicting, but in the intimate and unbroken correspondence of the succeeding thirty years no such letter as the one 'that had been better unwritt' ever interrupted the affectionate relations between them.

Feb. 15,
1657

Sir Ralph writes again cheerfully about a favourite dog of Mun's at Claydon 'Madame is courted by all the currs in Towne, she hath chosen the ugliest of them all, soe that shortly heere is likely to bee a rare Breed. Tell me how your Bodies fit you. Adieu, your loving father R V.' Herr Schott had come to London from Utrecht, and the 'bodies,' at 30*l.* the pair, which Mun still wore, were the heaviest of his expenses.

The Doctor is anxious to introduce his great-nephew into good society, but he finds his clothes sadly shabby for polite visits. London is very full and smart, and 'tis generally talked and beleevd that within few daies the Protector shall be crowned. Mun is in most pitifull equipage, now trappings at all.' Sir Ralph 'must supply and supply and supply, which is and shall be the burden of all my songs till it be done.'

Feb 14,
1657.

The Doctor gives an amusing account of their visit to 'Barronet Luckyn's,' where the old man fell in love with the daughter of the house if the youth did not. 'Havinge beene longe harpinge uppon an unpleasant stringe, I cannot with-

out joy tell you that I am labouringe for a more merry spinne, and to that end Mun and I and Mr Maunell went last night about 6 o'clock, a wooinge, where in earnest I saw her that pleased me very more than ordinary well, yea extraordinary well. A pure virgin eighteen years old, tall, slender, straight, handsome, with as much sweetness in her aspect as I know not more anywhere, so that out of my small skill in physiognomy, she must needs be well humoured. I saw her only in her hood, so that I cannot tell the colour of her haire, but I ghesse it to be towards flaxen; if I might pick and choose among all I know at first sight, I know none like her. Before I parted I said what I thought was fitt, and told her that if Sir William Luckyn had any services to command me, I would [wait] on him when and where he pleased.'

Sir William Luckyn of Messing Hall belonged to an Essex family, which had intermarried with the Grimstons, and Sir William's second son eventually succeeded to Gorhambury, where Sir Ralph and his wife had so often visited Lord and Lady Sussex. Lady Luckyn sent 'her sister on purpose to dine at the Doctor's to see Mun and make enquiry of him and of the estate.' Doctor 'gave her her lesson,' but 'has heard no more since.'

'Dear Ralph,' wrote Dr. Denton. 'In the first place I ^{March 12,} am of your opinion, that I am a person of very great judgment and soe great that I cannot erre, and now being seated in my infallible chaire, I tell you that I never thought I could doe any business soe well as your worshipp, especially your owne, as this of Luckin's is, and therefore a few instructions would have beene welcome, but let that passe. I have done what I can to keep the affaire alive, and that it may not chill on our part; my lady is still ill. Sir William's man told my cozen that his master would scruple at noe porcion betweene 5 & 10,000*l*, soe hee could have an estate answerable, especially a good lusty, present maintenance. As to this point, a little of your mind would do noe hurt, and I shall not looke on it at all as any affront to my infallible judgment. You must never thinke in such a

matter to truck and higgie with 100% per an. for 1,000% money. Certainly its fitt Mun should have one suit to make him looke like a gentleman, which he hath not. I thinke it would be a hard vy betweene his best suit and my serge d' 8d. Besides he has noe trappings,' he repeats, 'as hat, stockins, shoes, &c, en la mode'

Feb. 19,
1657.

Sir Ralph does not rate his son's taste or his personal attractions very high—'Mun is not at all nice either in point of Bewty or of Breeding, nor must that woeman bee soe that marries him', but fair as Elizabeth Luckyn is, Mun cannot be stirred to any onthusiasme about her. He writes to his father 'Mon oncle . . . m'amena dans Hoburne, et là me donna une veue innocente de la damoiselle, laquelle je n'ai pas voulu presumer de declarer, qu'elle me plaise ou deplaise, mais ai reservé cela à vostre jugement, car ma jeunesse n'est pas si folle et inconsiderée que d'entreprendre une acte de cette consequence sur ma cervelle seule.' Sir Ralph is pleased with this proper attitude of mind, and will 'the more willingly comply in anything that's reasonably desired; and if it bee your fortune to marry her, God grant shee may bee as discreet and vertuous as your mother, and make you noe worse a husband then your loving father.' Mun would not, for his own choice, marry at present; he is seized with a desire to continue his education, and he sends for his music books from Claydon: 'J'ai pris Kersey pour m'enseigner la Richemetique, à 20^s par mois, et il ne vient que 3 fois la septuaine; les arts et les sciences sont bien cheres icy, ils ont besoing d'estre bonnes.' The same terms are charged by masters of the violin and the lute.

Feb. 23,
1657.

March 5,
1657.

Lady Hobart now attacks Sir Ralph about Mun's clothes: 'truly I am much ashamed to see how he goes, not at all lick your son, for he has nothing neu lick any other young man, neither hat nor clos, nor lining, for he has suits I dar say your man wars beter. Pray let me beg of you to let me mack him but 6 shurts, and half a dosen bands and cofs, and put him a letill into the town fason, but all shall be plan, and I will dres his legs, all ribens ar left at the brechis, so that is much saved. I will deu nothing

prodigally [prodigally] but net, I will have but on sut I hop if you war hear you wold as much dislick it as I deu; I look on him as the top of my kindred, and if he war one set in a net way I am confident he wold kep it, he wold lick it very wil war it got all to his hand, but his genios does not ly to lock after it; I am confident I could make him a sparek. He tacks anything I say wil, and I chid him for going so earlesly.' Sir Ralph has a crushing reply to make 'Now for Mun's linnen, if hee weare his night sheirts when hee goes into company, neither he nor they can be commended by you or any other that sees them, but my Aunt Dr. knowes hee had very good whole sheirts and 2 halfe sheirts made within this moneth, which I am sure canot yet bee worne out; but if they were he hath not wanted money to supply any such defect. He hath had four score and ten pounds for this London journey, but cozen I pray doe not speake of this, for I know tis fitter and better to have mee thought a hard Father then hee a simple sonne.' To Dr Denton he writes 'Easter terme is the fittest time to buy him cloathes, for then all fashions alter; but if the wooing goe on sooner, then tis fit to cloath him presently.'

Dancing lessons from Moulin, a fashionable French master, are strongly recommended, Mun agrees—'*affin d'avoir une meilleure mine et grace dans mon portement, et une meilleure adresse en abordant ou accostant une personne*'; but his steel bodies make dancing almost too painful, although '*il n'y a personne qui puisse endurer une peine continuelle avec plus de patience que moy, car j'y ay esté accoustumé toute ma vie*.' The luckless lad has again run out of funds: 'A certain verse in holy scripture says, he who is wanting in one point fails in all—now I am in want of money, and certainly of everything else also.'

The young lady had not again been visited; Lady Luckyn had been ill, and Edmund had been 'in the hands of Mr. Wiseman, the surgeon.' 'Truly I might compare my afflictions to Job's,' he wrote to his father. 'I have taken purges and vomits, pills and potions, I

have been blooded, and I doe not know what I have not had, I have had so many things.' Sir William Luckyn is still inclined to treat. 'He seemes to be mighty fond of his daughter, and talks much of good allowance that they may live plentifully in their youth', but Dr. Denton writes 'that they have heard of your noble Bro Tom, and that your sisters live but in a meane condition, which is not very acceptable newes.' He is ordering a new suit for Mun 'at a very short warning'—'because he is to meet his Mrs. to-morrow in the Temple Garden,' and he is earnestly trying 'to mend his addresse which is but very indifferent,' as well as to put him 'in better cloaths.' Mun submits to the clothes, but fails to put on even the decent semblance of a lover, 'I beleeve myselfe of that temper,' he writes to his own friend Dr. Hyde, 'that I can easily break off, without heavy sorrow, when I see I cannot love with any conveniency' 'I am of your opinion that you will not run mad for love,' Hyde replies, 'yet I must still tell you that it is a passion not to be played with, neither ought you to presume on your owne strength soe faine as to try it.' He advises that Edmund should agree with his father about settlements 'before you have loved and liked, or else vast and horrid inconveniences may follow.'

Sir Ralph, who might grumble, but who did everything that was generous, had commissioned the Doctor to buy his son a saddle-horse. Prices are very high in town. 'There is scarce anythinge worth looking uppon under 25*l*, and those but indifferent neyther but Doctor will prog and prowl.' He has been asked 100*l*. for a gelding, 'they pack them so fast into France that now it is but aske and have even double their value.' He 'could fill a volume with stories of hunting after Jades in Hyde Park and Smithfield,' but he gets one at last for 16*l*. 10*s*.

It was a great happiness to Mun this summer to renew 'his infant acquaintance and friendship with Peg and Moll Eure,' and to be introduced to Peg East. Mun, standing about in Lady Luckyn's drawing-room, in a stiff new suit,

beside the flaxen beauty in a hood, cudgelling his brains for compliments and unable to recall anything but the Doctor's caustic remarks upon his manners, was an utterly different creature from Mun chatting with this trio of charming cousins, treated by them with frank, sisterly kindness. There are no dreadful 'treaties' in the background, and he is quite at his ease. They have a host of childish memories in common of their life in France, which they recall to each other, and explain to Peg Fust. Margaret and Mary can give him the latest gossip from Blois, of Prevost, of Madame Testard, of the dancing-master and the doctor, and others who were tiresome enough in reality, but as interesting to discuss afterwards as the characters of a story-book. They remember the fun of the fair, with all Luce's prudent anxieties, and the pleasures of the grape-gathering, but they agree that there is nothing after all so delightful as an English summer, and plan frequent meetings at Claydon and Whitsondine. There is an exchange of notes when the cousins separate, and Mun earnestly desires a continuance of the intimacy 'which began in ower most innocent and tender yeares.' The wilful beauty, Peg, 'Pussy's Mad Fure' as she calls herself, had just refused a very eligible suitor, but she chooses to be specially gracious to Mun. She looks forward to their next meeting; 'wee will be passing merry; Peg Fust, though it is not usuall with hir to adore strangers, tho very disarving, it [yet] realy she saith that ther was something of extraordinary sivilty in you which makes her much glory in your acquaintance.' Such jokes are not at all in Mary's line, but she writes a proper little note of cousinly civility. 'Sir, I cannot but esteem it a very great honour to renew that acquaintance with you which time and far distance hath worne something out of our memories, but cannot blot out the obligations I have ever receaved from you, especially the last which I must ever owne as a very great favor and beseech you to bring these impertinencies as low as I would doe any thought of being lesse then, Sir, your most humble servant, Mary Fure.'

Miss Luckyn¹ showing as little zeal as Mun did for any further interviews, Sir Ralph made another serious attempt at a 'match' for his son, and this time 'the not impossible she' was Alianora Tryon. Her ancestor, Peter Tryon, was a Protestant who had fled from Alva's persecution in the Netherlands. The girl's grandfather, Sir Samuel Tryon, made a baronet in 1620, bought the property of Halstead from old Sir Thomas Gardiner, Cary Verney's father-in-law, and was High Sheriff of Essex in 1650. His widow, Elizabeth Eldred, married Sir Edward Wortley, Lady Warwick's brother, and report said that as guardian Sir Edward had wasted the estate, and had arranged a marriage between his little stepson and his niece, Eleanor Lee, Lady Warwick's daughter by her first husband, for whom Sir Samuel had no liking. Two children, Samuel and Alianora, were born of this marriage.

Alianora, mercifully called Ellen or Nell in daily life, was staying with her young cousin, Sir Harry Lee (one of Margaret Eure's many suitors), and his mother, now Countess of Rochester. Visits to Ditchley were among the happiest memories of Sir Ralph's childhood. It was in itself a liberal education for Mun to see the fine house and its treasures, and it was delightful to think of renewing such old intimacies. Sir Ralph was as much charmed with Mistress Tryon as the Doctor had been with Mistress Luckyn. He wrote 'to the Countesse of Warwick. Madame,—Finding that the young Lady was come to Ditchley on Tuesday the 28th [July] my selfe and sonne went thether to attend her, where we had soe free and favourable a reception both from my Lady Rochester and Sir Harry Lee that we stayed till the Mounday after; and, had I yeelded to my sonn's desires, wee had still been there. For he is soe much taken with mistress Trion that if you please to suffer him to bee her servant, he will ever acknowledge the favour. . . . The truth is, Madame, she is every way soe well accomplished, and carries her selfe soe well and soe discreetly (even beyond her age) that she hath already soe charmed us both. . . . I

Aug. 10,
1657

¹ Elizabeth Luckyn m. Geoffrey Nightingale, of Kneeworth.

shall be confident that Heaven hath a perticuler blessing in store for mee and for my family, in providing such a person for my sonne; who though hee is noe courtier, nor noe complimentall man, yett I hope hee will endeavour by the reallity and constancy of his affection to make some recompence for his want of ceremonie; and if my care or kindnesse can contribute anything towards her happinesse, my obligations to your Ladyshippe will be a sufficient Tye, to make me doe my utmost, and (if it were possible), even beyond the power of, Madame, your most humble, most faithful, and most obliged servant, R. V.' Beautifully balanced phrases, but a little premature.

Lady Warwick replies at great length, with real affection for 'Nell.' She first refers to 'that friendship that was many years begonne among us,' and continues, 'I finde by your letter that your selfe and sone have very good thoughts of my grandchild, I must thanke you for it, for i doubt she cannot deserre itt, being so yonge and having apparede so lettill in the worlde, that she must nedes be wantinge in many things yett. I have righton to hur and tolde hur that i very much lyke of this mach for hur. I should not ventir hur so sone into the worlde but that I am confident you will supply hur in all that wants, and be by your advise and counsell bouth father, mother and all, for she is younge and I hope of so good an nature that you may fram hur to what you can desire. P.S. My daughter Rochester sath as much good of your sone as can be sade, and I had a letter from my grandchilde, and I find she lykes him very will but hath not confidence i believe to till mee she is in love with him, but I presume hur lykeinge will increse daily, . . . your sone cannot but bee very good, cominge from such a stoke of goodness.' My Lady Rochester is equally cordial: 'For your sonne I may say it without flattering him, hee appeares too mee so excellent a young man, and carried himselfe with that prudence and discretion all the while of his being at Dichley both to his M^{rs} and everybody els, that hee must in justice gaine both my high esteeme and all that doe belong too mee; you are strangely hapy

Aug. 27,
1657.

Aug. 29,
1657.

in him and truly I hope you wille be in her when she is yours.'

In the beginning of September, a childish little letter, much disfigured by blots, arrived from the young lady in which she tells 'Mr. Verney' that he has rated her merits too highly, 'yet I must needs say I see soe much of integrity in all your professions, this littell time I have knowne you, that I am bound to confes I have reson to acknoledg you have obledg mee to bee, sir, your fiend and servant, Elen Tryon'

Sept. 3,
1657.

Sir Ralph has ordered Mun some more courting clothes, the Doctor has chosen a suit; 'there are other fasshioned Ribands worn beside these, but fitt for none but footinen or a Morrice dauncer, and would not have pleased grave Mons^r Mun, and therefore I gave my vote for these.' Edmund is honestly anxious to play his part, but he does not hurry back to Ditchley, there were no memories of Blois to facilitate conversation with Almonora, and the 'home-keeping' girl had but 'homely wits.' All through the summer the details of the marriage settlements were being discussed between Sir Ralph and Mr. John Cary, who conducted the business on the lady's side, there is a whole bundle of papers at Claydon of proposals and counter-proposals; and among them Sir Edward Wortley's promise 'to give my neece Ellenor Tryan, my Wife's Grandchilde, five hundred pounds, and a hundred pounds a yeare for five yeares,' her eventual portion being 5,000*l*.

Oct 13.

In October, after a very sickly summer, Sir Ralph has his house full of guests; 'you need not invite man, woman, child nor horse to Claydon,' said the Doctor, 'they'l come without sending for.' Sir Ralph writes to Mr. Cary to excuse Mun's absence from 'his mistress.' 'I have had very many of my kindred heere for 10 or 12 daies together, and divers of them not having scene my sonne since his infancie pretend they came now heather purposely to be acquainted with him, so that he is still thaire prisoner heere, or else he had not been such a stranger at Ditchley. Yesterday one coachfull went away, but retourne againe next

weeke, and then I beleeve they will be gon together, in the meane time I hope his stay heere will not bee misinterpreted by any, since as the case stands it cannot hansomly bee avoyded.' Alanoia's peace of mind was not disturbed. 'For Mistress Tryon,' writes Mr Gay, 'I can discover nothing of her mind against what is desired by your selfe and us heere, only she is youngie and not so fixt as persons of more yeares. I therefore much mind not every little picket of hers.'

Mrs Sherard had another heiress in reserve, in her own county, should more genteel matches fail. 'an ordinary man's daughter; her father was a kind of a farmer but he hath given her a kind of breeding, as I hear he hath had her taught to sing, and to play, and to dance, but I beleeve it is all olde fashioned. Her father will give her five thousand pound, and hath but on daughter more, and she is sickly and never like to marry, and if not, shee will have more than enouf, for it is beleyed her father is worth above 30 thousand pounds, and dooth daily increas in welth. I hear shee is not but of a very good disposition.' Cousin Drake has also a proposal. 'Here is a match for your sonn, Mr. Wilson's daughter of Surrey (formerly a citizen) that I think worthy your consideration; they offer 5,500*l*.'

The autumn passed away, and the fashionable world was beginning to think of going up to town for the winter season. Mrs. Sherard allowed Peg and Mall to accept 'Queen Katherine's' hospitable invitation to spend it with her in Covent Garden. The meetings with Mun were soon resumed, and Peg wrote to Sir Ralph that they only needed his good company to be quite happy. 'Dr's Nancie,' aged seventeen, was not the least merry of the party, and the signatures of the four young people occur together as witnesses to a bond signed at the Doctor's house.

Nancy had attracted a suitor a year before; nothing had come of it but one of the Doctor's jokes; he wrote to Sir Ralph: 'We had need call a counceill for marryinge and givinge in marriage, you for your sis, she for hers, and I for mine, who am earnestly sollicitated for my girle by one

Nov. 20,
1656.

Mr Piggott, for his son who is of Graies Inne . . . his estate is within a mile of Newport in Shropshire.'

Mrs. Sherard was too careful a mother to allow her daughters to go out in London, even with their Uncle and Aunt, without giving minute directions concerning them. For all rules of conduct she refers them to Sir Ralph, whose standard of taste and propriety she rightly considered a much higher one than Mrs. William Denton's. She has no anxieties about the gentle Mary, whose manner repels suitors, and who, with her great affection for Peg, is content to wait upon her sister's triumphs. But for Peg she entreats Sir Ralph to 'order hir as you thinke fit. I would not by any means perswade hir to any as shee likes not—but play tackete hir off of saying shee will and then shee will not, for soe shee did about Strickland]. I know you can manig hir lick you, and shee will bee free and tell you her mind. I can say but as I did befor, I leave her holly to your selfe and the Dr for to treat of the conditions, and shee to ples hir selfe in the man. I know shee will loocke for a good estate, else I should not leave it soe holy to hir.'

Nov 16,
1657.

Peg Eure's 'she will and she will not' had already brought her family into trouble. Lord Strickland was 'highly dissatisfied' with the breaking off of the alliance with his kinsman. Lord Eure took up his quarrel; and was very 'fierce'; 'it seems he fell foul of the Dr in open coorte,' and they had a 'smart bout.' But it was so difficult to quarrel with the Doctor that they made it up again at their next meeting. Mrs. Sherard still favoured the Strickland suit; 'The greatest advantig of all,' she writes, 'is thay air extream good, which I dow more value then all the other convenienceys for I dessyer to mach my children wher they may have examples of pyatey, for the world is very bad, and youth is apete to goe astray.' She considers that Peg has treated Mr. Strickland badly. 'I have not diggestid the unhandsome breacking off of that mach, althoe my owne inocense was such as nothing can be more then it.' Sir Ralph had always favoured Robert Cotton's suit, and Luce, who had known his devotion

to Peg at Blois, 'is a maine stickler' for Cotton. The young man himself found Mrs. Sherard's 'admirable Daughter soe much improved since I sawe her last in France as I finde that that affection which I thought to bee extraordinarie greate, was but the beginning of a much more violent one.' He had been allowed to visit Whitsondine in the autumn of 1655, but Mrs. Sherard had never fancied him. 'We aier off of Cotton,' she writes; 'wee may ingage in som other plas without acceptiones.' Meanwhile 'Mistress Eure hath declared, not only against Mr Staickland, Nov 3,
1656 but against all other that have father or mother, or have binne contrary to the side her father was of,' in the war, and Luce begs Sir Ralph to do his best 'to medigate my lady's anger against her dau'. 'She hath divers times said, tho not to me,' wrote Mrs. Sherard, 'that if I should carry her to the Church she would tell them ther, that shee would not mary them if they had either father or mother . . . you may imagine me to be in some trobull, but I hope to have comfort in the rest of my sweet children. Godallnightey give his gras & that alters nateur.'

Mr. Cotton, having been so often extinguished by Mrs. Sherard, was persuaded by an aunt to transfer his attentions to another heiress, daughter of Sir Thomas Salusbury of Llewenny, and just when Peg was relenting towards him, Mrs. Sherard hears with very unreasonable displeasure that 'Mr Cotton is married. I would faine know whithr it be to his 7,000 pound lady.'

The Doctor was overwhelmed with proposals: 'Sir Tho^s Nov 5,
1657 Ingram treats for Mr Slingsby, Sir Tho: Hutton for his sonne, & one Barronett Williams is on foot alsoe, but which hare to hunt I know not.' Luce Sheppard reports that: 'Sir Thomas liveth within 4 miles to Mr Cuts, in 5 miles of Cambridg; the mother yet liveing, not above 2 or 3 and forty: there is 6 or 7 children in all. The young gent: not very tall, but well shaped for his height.' Peg gave her mother '10 words for one,' nobody but Sir Ralph could manage her—'As I take it, its very convenient,' writes the Doctor, 'for the Worshipful Dominie Politick to be here

when Peg Eure comes upp to be wooed, therefore prepare for it.' 'She is an uncertaine creature to deale withall; noe faith in villanous woman. She came upp with as much joy & resolution to have M^r Strickland as could be, and now she flaggs wonderfully.' Lord St. John's son was also in question, but he was 'contracted' soon after 'to one of 13 years old.'

Mrs. Sherard wrote (about Dec. 6) thanking Sir Ralph for a good report of her daughters. 'I shall like them the bettr my selfe, for I know you aier betor abull to Juge of them then I am. I have tacked som painies with them to put as good prinsiobles in them as I am capabull to dow, and I hope God will give his blessing with it. I hir by the by that Moll hath a great mind to see a play; if they be as they have bin this many eyers [years] tugged to peisuses at them, I shall not like them, soe I have refred hir to you. If you think as she may goe with safty, I am well content, soe shoo goes with thos persones as tis fit for hir, I believe peg had rather goe A visit.' Mrs. Sherard's anxiety lest her daughter should be tugged to pieces by the crowds at the theatre suggests that such amusements were coming into fashion again.

In the midst of all this pleasant intercourse a crisis came in Mun's easy-going life probably as surprising to himself as to those about him; he fell seriously and desperately in love. The change wrought in his character was immediate, it was no longer a question of a shadowy female figure whom Uncle Doctor or Sir Ralph might recommend, he took his life into his own hands; there was only one face and one voice now in the world for him—the face and voice of Mary Eure. The two older men who were managing the 'matching' so comfortably, with no gusts of passion to complicate the making of treaties, must have been startled; but Sir Ralph, who had himself known what true love was, may not have been displeased to see his son shake off his apathy. At any rate they accepted the position; Sir Ralph was left to make peace as best he could with Lady Warwick and Sir Edward

Wortley,¹ and Dr. Denton gallantly opened the fresh campaign by a letter to his sister Mrs. Sheard, which probably crossed the one she last wrote to Sir Ralph, in happy unconsciousness of this fresh complication. 'Mun Vernev hath lately declined a very good match propounded for him by his father, whereat wee both wondred not a little. After much enquiry, we found his reason was because he had absolutely fixed and settled already his affection upon your Mall, which he thought most proper to be communicated unto you in the first place. Wee represented unto him your aversenesse of bestowing your daughter in your familie, he says he hath considered that, and hath satisfied himselfe in that point, [and] that he beleevs he can satisfy you . . . I offer this to your consideration and wayte your answer'

Dec 7,
1657.

This opening of the negotiations was evidently undertaken with much deliberation. The rough copy of this letter is partly in Sir Ralph's hand, and partly in Dr. Denton's, and there had been a discussion whether the young lady should be referred to as 'your daughter Mary,' or as she was usually called 'Mall' by the two elderly men who had acted so kind a part towards the girl since her father's death. Mrs. Sheard replied in general terms that her daughter was averse to the married state, and implied that when her two little girls were under Sir Ralph's care at Blois, he had somewhat abused her confidence by planning this match. Sir Ralph solemnly denies that he has ever planned or desired it, 'for I know shee deserves the best of men and Fortunes . . . Tis true I find him much more taken with her, then ever I thought he could have been with any woeman; and I cannot blame him, for were I of his years, I myselfe should bee his Rivall.'

Dec. 21,
1657.

Some coyness on the maiden's part was only to be expected, but when the marriage was so desirable on both sides in point of character, income, and position, Sir Ralph seems

¹ Alianora Tryon married Sir Richard Franklyn, Bart., of Moor Park, Hants, and eventually, when her brother Sir Samuel died unmarried in 1671, became a considerable heiress.

to have had no doubt that so ardent a suitor as his son would eventually win the lady. But, alas, Mary had altered as well as Edmund, and the cousin who had been so welcome a friend and playmate, became positively repulsive to her as a lover—a change of feeling which he could not be expected either to credit or to understand.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

‘THE CORROSIVE OF A DENIAL.’

1657-1660.

ON Christmas Day, 1657, Edmund came of age, but in the unsettled state of the times, and of his own prospects, no family festivities seem to have marked his birthday. The opening of the New Year, 1658, which was to bring him so much suspense and sorrow, found him in London ill with measles and a complication of cold, cough, and ague. He writes anxious letters to Dr. Denton about the matter nearest his heart. Aunt Sherard's scruples seem to him very far fetched. ‘she said she could not be satisfied in point of kindred, then the world being wyde, she would not venture her conscience upon a disputable point, besides that she had noe mind to part with her daughter as long as she lived.’ He wants the Doctor's help and counsel. Sir Ralph uses an argument which sounds strangely in our ears, the drift of his long letter being that if Mun would not or could not find a wife, he might be driven to marry again. Mun replies in low spirits; Aunt Sherard has been in town, but is sending her girls home; he is only too anxious to be married—to Mary; Eleanor Tryon's humours and deportment had been very disagreeable to him on a nearer acquaintance (which by the by was entirely an afterthought): his father sees now that he is capable of a real and deep attachment, whereupon he relapses into a recital of Mary's charms; Sir Ralph need never think of marriage if it depends upon his son's devotion: he hints that it would be disastrous to Claydon to have to furnish fortunes for a second family, and he concludes with a reference at once

politic and affectionate to 'ma chere mère defunte,' whose large fortune he is sure his father would not wish to leave away from her own children.

The girls were now perversely determined to make fun of Edmund, but were quite devoted to Sir Ralph, and Mary Eure the night before leaving town appealed to him to come to their aid, Margaret had been once again sought in marriage, by a 'son of Sir Thomas Danby, a Knight and Baronet of the North,' a match which her mother thought so desuabable that she was not inclined to tolerate in Margaret the objections she allowed Mary to urge against a lover equally unacceptable. 'Sir,' wrote Mary to Sir Ralph, 'I must begg of you to be att Whitsondine as soone as possible your occasions will give you leave, for my Mother is much displeased att my sister for refusing this Mr. Danby, and if you doe not come to make her peace with her mother shee will be utterly undon. Sir, I hope you will pardon my strange rude letres, for my part I shall pray to God with all my hart that I may see you very sudenly at Whitsondine, for I am sure I shall doe noing butt ere as long as my Mother is so angry with my sister and I cannot hope for any peace till you come.' Mary no longer concludes with 'my sarvice to my cousan Edmund.' A few days later she rejoices that Sir Ralph had not undertaken a 'durty Journey' at her desire, 'for God be blessed my sister has so well considered with her self, that shee has given all possible satisfaction to my Mother's desire who never said one word of it to her since shee came from London, and truly I found my mother's cariedge to my sister much otherwayes then I could have expected . . . so that I could not be satisfied without imparting to you my extream Joy who bog your silence for this and my former lettre.' Mrs. Sherard believes that Peg 'sorens highe'; she objects not to the 'fentir fortune,' but to the present maintenance that Mr. Danby can settle upon her: 'she hath now bin 12 wickes in towne and hath good acquaintance and bin in much company, and I have not hurd of any mach that hath bin ofered that is soe good as this is . . . and in all this four yeares

and a halfe that shee hath bin in ingland excepting that of Sir Harry Le, I know of no others as hath bin worth the accepting.' Mrs. Sherard might have been letting a furnished house, and Muu may be forgiven for doubting whether her objections to parting with a daughter were insuperable.

Mrs. Sherard writes again from Whitsondine in high good humour when Peg has given 'her free consent for me to treat,' and to do her justice she believes that Mr. Danby has much to recommend him besides his estate, which is 'very considerable' 'Such a man as he is, is not easily to be found, for he hath a good deale of wit, and of a good understanding and a discreet person. . . . Had I sought all ingland I thinke I could not have found one as would have shewted with my Dafters Disposition soe well as this will dow, for he is free from all vice as far as I can leine; his governor in his family was one Dr Binaconibe, he had bin one of the Kinges Chaplins. . . . I have bin told by thos as had it out of his owne mouth, that he is a great admirer of him,' &c. &c. Sir Ralph is glad to hear that 'Peg has returned to her obedience,' and hopes she will entrust to her mother all the pecuniary part of the business. Mrs. Sherard retorts sharply that there is no reason to praise Peg's obedience, for she has had none of it in this affair, 'and as for her trusting of me to looke into her estat . . . If shee cannot live of 2,000 I beleve ten thousand will not satisfie her, all I find as shee desires it for, is but to spend it uppon her vanities, which will macke her account the hevier at the day of judgment. In my esteeme an honest ghentilman with 2,000 a yeare is richies enoufe; if he hath that I shall be well satisfied, and soe will all resonabull peopel.' She does not pretend that Mr. Danby is an attractive person, she has seen many a man 'more modish and more taking than himselfe,' but she feels sure he will bear with Peg's humours, 'having 'discretion enoufe and good nateur.'

Sir Ralph treated the wayward girl with a courtesy to which her mother never condescended. 'Deare cozen,' he wrote when Mrs. Sherard and Peg had fallen out

more violently than usual. 'I confesse I can not commend your resolution. . . . I will not argue it with you now, when I see you next wee will chat about it. But what ever you doe in that, I know you are too discreet & too good to dininish any of that respect & duty thats due unto your Mother. Let all your words and actions be milde & humble & with submission unto her, for that's the way to regaine her favour, and therby your owne happiness. Belceve me, cozen, there is not a better-natured Woeman liveing, nor can a Mother bee more tender or affectionate to a childe then shee hath been to you, nor more carefull of a Fortune then shee hath been of yours; and though perhaps, shee often chides & tells you plainly of your little faults, & with such an eagernessee as possibly you may conceive too much for such small matters, yet your back hath been no sooner turned but I have observed her taking twenty occasions to commend you and thanke God for you, as one of her greatest blessings.' Peg Fust sided with her aunt, and thought Peg Eure too dainty. Mr. Danby, she says, 'is very free from that fashionable vise of being a good fellow. . . . Richer are to be had, if she can get them, but a siveler sober man, I thinck is hardly to be found'

Nancy Denton too claimed her godfather's help to coax her mother, as she wanted an allowance; her father was willing she should have 30*l.*; 'Sir,' she wrote, 'I shall desiar you to speak on it by cance, & if my mothar shuld ask you whathar I spoke unto you, pray say I naver spoke unto you. . . . Sr I pray doe not speak of it befor me.' Well might she add in her next letter: 'I cannat cues but blus when I thinck of the rudnes & trubell I put upon you.'

Mrs. Sherard has enough on her hands; her two would-be sons-in-law are constantly writing to her and waiting upon her, and she has two little Sherard boys to attend to; she can do nothing without Sir Ralph's help, so in the intervals of snubbing his son she consults him about her own. Edmund, who in height and good looks had much the advantage of Mr. Danby, and whose worldly position was quite as eligible, hopes that Moll, like Peg, may be

brought round to a better mind, and his great desire is now to secure the same powerful and peremptory intercession on his own behalf that had done so much for her sister's fortunate, excellent, and unattractive suitor. He thinks it well to offer Mrs. Sherard's conscience the consolation of a ghostly father, in the person of the Rector of Claydon. Kind Mr. Butterfield mounted his cob, and jogged off into Rutlandshire to allay her scruples about the marriage of first cousins once removed. He carried in his pocket a love-letter for Mary, and a handsome offer of settlements to be given to Mrs. Sherard from Sir Ralph, when her religious doubts had been removed.

Edmund writes to Dr. Denton from Claydon. 'This ^{March 15,} very day our Parson Butterfield went to my Aunt Sherard's ^{1638.} at Whitsondine, . . . having had a good interest in my Aunt formerly, he hopes to find the same still, however he sayd that he would put her hard to it, the success you shall hear by the next.'

Of 'success' in this embassy there was nothing to record, although Mun acknowledged that the Rector had done him 'Knights service.' 'She desired Mr. Butterfield to present her service to me with hudge kindness . . . she is the best natured creature in the world I think & I know the length of her foot to a haire's breadth, she is mighty studious & Romanticq, & those commonly fall in love . . . she is a soldd judicious wench.' To Mary he writes, 'Every joynt in your body, & every perfection of your soule, are inventoried in my heart.' 'My Mistis, her sister and Peg Fust,' he writes again, 'make themselves very merry with my sending Parson Butterfield to Whitsondine, and they wonder that my father did not advise me better than to send such a person a wooing—they sayd that in truth he was improper for that purpose, neither did I send him for that to my Mistis, but to the mother only that he might satisfye her pretended scruple of conscience. I must confesse, though the man be very wise, he has an extraordinary sneaking countenance and way with him, which most of his profession have (me thinkes) who are of the pretended reformed

religion.' Is Edmund contrasting the ministers of the Commonwealth with the courtly priests and Jesuits he had known abroad? or is his sweeping condemnation of the English clergy amply explained by his being crossed in love? In any case he is ungratefully angry with poor Mr. Butterfield. Mrs. Sherard, however, expresses the warmest regard for her young 'cousin Mun'; Mr. Butterfield has convinced her that the marriage is not unlawful—and she adds affectionately to Sir Ralph: 'You cannot imagine the trouble I am in, that I cannot answer your sonne's inclinations as to Deare Mull, for she hath other thoughts than to marry'

Mr. Butterfield, conscious of gifts, and entirely unconscious that he had left behind him any unfavourable impression, makes another appeal to Mrs. Sherard, which gives us a kindlier picture of Mun than he has left us of the Rector. 'Madam, I humbly thanke you for my courteous useage at your house: in obedience to your will I have cast all the colde water of your's and your daughter's reasons and denyals upon the flames of that passionate young gentleman in whose noble heart the fire had taken such fast hold before, and is growne to such a strength that it converts all things into fuell, and will I feare in time destroy the whole Fabricke, if you can do no more to quench it, then for ought I see others can. Tis Infinit pity such generous love in a person so wise, so sober, provident and hopefull, the onely expectation of a family so well deserving, should be ruin'd by so sad a fate . . . And truly tis unkindly done of that young and so virtuous Lady to be so good, so amiable, and to appeare so to this wretched world as a destructive Meteor onely to the miserable beholders. If you will not help, yet pity him at least; I know you have sometimes felt your selfe the power, the Tyranny of love, and let him go at least and take the doome of his rash and wrong affection, from those lips that gave him this fatall wound; who can tell but that may be his cure. [We hope Mrs. Aris *vouue* was treated to some of these lovely phrases for home consumption.] In my conscience,' continues the

worthy rector, 'he would be as good, as kinde, as provident, as happy a husband for her as the World affords. I desire not to trouble you with a reply to these my sawcy lines Only you pardon for my fienenes, I cannot pleade the cause of a friend and Lover with that coolenes and discretion that a many can. You will finde the story no Romance'

Her religious scruples removed, Mrs. Sherard starts a fresh objection: Moll has been told by a French physician that if she marries she will certainly die, and Edmund appeals to Dr. Denton to disabuse her of what he considers a preposterous notion; and to assure her that 'matrimony is a soveraigne if not the only compleate medicine for all feminine infirmities.' He feels that Mary might safely trust herself with him, 'being that I love her so intirely.'

But Edmund could not leave his interests with any advocate, and he writes to Mary from Claydon with a depth of feeling which all the affectation of the style cannot conceal. 'Madam, you are soe perfect empressse of my heart April 12, 1658. that in obedience to yours by Mr Butterfield, I have used more violence uppon my selfe these 3 weekes then a Russe, whoe takes it for an honnour to destroy himselfe at his Prince's comand for my affection is so pure that it carryes with it as absolute resignation of my selfe to you though with my owne destruction, and in conformitye to your order, I beleived that you were then best enjoyed by mee when I wrought your greatest content. Belcive me (Madam) this zeale hath forced me out of my selfe, as faire as any saint ever was, in a rapture, yet after all my art and diligence to put this candle under a bushell, it burnt the more furiouslye, because I tryed so much to extinguish it; for I protest before the majesty of God, I find by strong experience, that I can noe more obteyne of my will to abate of your love, then I can of my memorye that there is noe such person as you are, or my understanding that you are not adorned with all those perfections, theidea whereof doth soe possesse and ravish my soul. I vow by your supremacye and my allegiance that I can ascribe the growth of my love to this vast height to no other cause but your huge

merit, and my greate care not to sin against it through unadvisednesse or indiscretion ; this made me study how to compose my father's displeasure, and answere your Lady mother's scruples, and your desire of single life, before I totally submitted to the sweete conquest your goodnesse hath over mee, to which I am now so compleate a captive that all the neglect you can fasten on your slave, or the diversion friends can prompt me to, are able to beget noe other thought in me then of living and dymg your *devotee*, wherefore I beseech you to consider how it can become your Nature, soe full of grace and goodnesse, to call me not Naomi, but Marah, for the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me, and the waters of Marah are bitter to your supplicant, by giving bitternesse of Spirit to that heart which begs your compassion and comfort, your owne knowledge of the integritye thereof cannot but tell you, this deserves not the corrosive of a deniall, & my fayth and knowledge of your candor & sweetnesse assure me that no word so harsh can fall from your tongue or pen. I beseech you to give me leave to adde one graine of reason to all this weight of affection which is that your resolution is contrary to that end whereto God and nature ordeyned you : not regardful to your dearest relations dead and living, but above all injurious to your selfe ; . . . if you put my affection in one scale and your resolution in the other, & if only judgement held the ballance (which I reasonably hope kindnesse may some what bias) I shall not bee condemned for prising this so greate and well grounded truth that it is impossible for me to live or die other then, Madame, Sweetest Lady, Your most passionately devoted vassal, Edmund Verney.'

He keeps a copy of the letter, with a note that 'The superscription was—For M^{rs} Mary Eure—and no more,' as if language failed to supply any adequate address! Mary had refused to receive his letters, but Mun sent this one to Dr. Denton to forward. 'Not to convey it,' writes his uncle, 'might have argued coldness in me towards your concerne, & to convey is contrary to my sister's instructions, however its gone for this time, but I must begg your excuse for the

like, what I doe I shall doe openly.' Mun had found an unexpected ally. 'You have a sollicitrix here that was yours body and bones, which I presume you did as little dreame of as my selfe—which is my wife. It seemes my sister had chatted it out to her & shee prest it on in her way which is earnest enough, but for ought I could understand gave her small encouragement'

A week later Edmund hears that Mrs. Sherard is in town without the girls; his interview with her settles nothing, and he writes to her after thinking it over: 'I am amazed that a lady soe vertuous & discrete as you are should leave a gentleman & a lover both unsatisfied in reason and discontented in his affection.' He has hinted to her that she is treating him very differently from Mr. Danby—she will not say that Mary has any dislike to him, but that she prefers a single life, 'that,' he says pathetically, 'is a point that none can justifye the insisting upon but her selfe: and if she please to improve that modest resolution to a perfect vow, I know none concerned therein but God her selfe and mee; neither becomes it either my judgement or affection to receive the finall result of that from any mouth but her owne. The vastnesse of my affection for the daughter, will doubtlesse obtaine pardon from the mother, for all the indiscretion or rudeness which in this matter may be committed by me, who would make it the whole studdy of my life to please both your selfe and your daughter (the first and only love my youth ever had or shall have), if ever I bee so happy as to be honoured with the title of your most dutifull most obedient sonne and most devoted humble servant, Edmund Veruey.'

A letter from Mary to her mother duly forwarded to Sir Ralph, copied by him and docketed 'I showed Mun the ^{May 8,} originall letter,' ought to have convinced the latter that ^{1658.} there was a more serious obstacle to overcome than Aunt Sherard's irresolution. 'Madame, I have received a wandering letter from my Cozen Edmond Verney, how it came to Melton I know not, but there Joseph found it; really I was never more surprised in my life, for I thought my last to

him might have prevented his farther troubling himselfe, for since you have alwaies been pleased to leave me to my selfe I could wish he knew that if hee write or speake a Thousand times it will not prevaile with me at all. I am sorry hee forceth mee to say, if I would marry it should not bee him [alas for the loophole of comfort Mun had found before!], not that I have anything against my cozen, but esteeme him as hee is my neare relation, but never whilst I breathe will I bee wrought to have the least thought of giving him any encouragement in his pretentions, hee would much oblige me to leave persisting in it. Madame, I shall not answer his letter without your command, which I hope I shall not receive because I should unwillingly obey it. All the acknowledgment in the world I render you for your long past promise of never perswading me to marry. Sweet Madlamo, that is my resolution; when I change it, your Ladyshipp shall know, but I beleeve I shall never trouble you with that message. Bee pleased to Pardon this long impertinency and grant me your blessing, thus I remaine, Deare Madame, your obedient daughter, Mary Eure.'

May 21,
1658.

This letter only gave the offender an excuse for writing to his mistress to implore her pardon: 'Madam,' writes Edmund from Covent Garden, 'my last made you my confessor; and this humbly beggs leave to tell you that a Penitent cannot esteeme himselfe forgiven till he find himselfe restored to grace, therefore I beseech you to use your power, injoyne mee penance; whereby I may learne and expiate the depth of my guilt and your displeasure. I have ransackt every corner of my heart, and called every thought thereof concerning my mistress and her mother to a strict account and can find nothing but height of affection for the one and of respect and dutye for the other. Yet good natures are sollicitous when a misapprehension befalls them, as much as if they were really guiltie; this makes Mun Verney professe that he is more angry with himselfe that your Ladyship should imagine,' etc., etc., etc. He declares it would be a 'slender bragge' to say that he is incapable of displeasing her; he again prays for an interview, 'for I am

among those objects which are scene and please best at a closer view.'

Another elaborate letter followed to Mrs. Sherard, indeed, if fine-drawn phrases could avail, Edmund does not spare them: he is in constant correspondence with his own friend, Dr. Hyde, about the etiquette of courtship.

Dr. Thomas Hyde's share in Edmund's wooing is not the least curious part of the story. He was a first cousin of Sir Edmund's old friend Lord Clarendon, and brother of Sir Robert Hyde, the Judge, who came to Aylesbury on circuit after the Restoration, and kept up the family friendship with the Verneys. He was a Fellow of New College, and Judge of the Admiralty Court, and lived at Gray's Inn when he was not at Salisbury. They wrote to each other in terms of the most fanciful and extravagant affection; Edmund had an unbounded admiration for his friend's acquirements and his easy flow of words. Edmund sends skeleton letters for Dr. Hyde 'to adorn'; to despatch one of his own beside one of the Doctor's would be, he says, 'like ploughing with an ox and an ass!' Hyde seems to have been a selfish, worldly man; he encouraged Edmund in hard thoughts of his father, and sent him letters in an underhand way under cover to Parson Aris and others. Here is a note from the Doctor enclosing copies of letters for Mun to write to Peg Eure, Peg Fust, and Luce Sheppard: 'Good Sir, your last came this morning to my hands, & in compliance therewith I have made the enclosed. It is an hard task to make bricks without straw, but I have raked together some rubbish. The directions are followed as neare as I might, & I was bound to venter at some proportionation of expressions by conjecture. For instructions of this nature can hardly be delivered but by word of Mouth. Not but what I rejoyce to find your Pen see Terse, that I thinke it exceeds myne, but the Nature & Variety of the subject beares it not. All is submitted to your discretion for alteration, addition, or totall rejection! only that you use, write and poynt as you sawe it under my hand.'

'Insist much,' writes Mun in ordering another love-letter,

'upon passionate lamentations, complaints & pittifull moanes . . . & how that I will serve her seven & seven yeares as long as Jacob served for his beloved Rachel, in hopes that her mind may alter heereafter (Scripture sayings take much). . . . I must be extreaculy passionate . . . & expresse that whatsoever became on it, I should die her passionate lover.'

Captain and Mrs. Sherard paid a visit to Claydon, but they only brought Peg Fust with them; the two Eure girls were prudently left behind at Whitsondine, to Mun's great disappointment. The letters so carefully prepared were to congratulate Peg Eure on her engagement to Mr. Danby. He does not fail to insinuate a hope that her good example may influence her sister. Luce Sheppard, because of her intimacy with the girls, has suddenly become a most interesting person in his eyes, and the following note, written by Dr. Hyde and revised by Mun, was evidently felt to be a triumph of antithesis in epistolary art. 'M^{rs} Sheppard, my disposition commands me to pay thanks at home for civilities received Abroade. These you afforded mee in France in soe high measure, that tract of time cannot extinguish the obligations thereof, but encreases it, and creates in me a longing desire of requitall. I hope this acknowledgement will not seeme to come late, for it owes the courtesies done to Mun Verney, Boy, so soone as he could write, Man. My arrivall to this state hath put in my head many considerations, more than ever you knew in it; but in time you shall know more, not doubting but you will promote them to the utmost of your industrie and power, and in this confidence rests your saythfull friend and servant.'

June 7,
1658.

'My dearest Mistresse,' Edmund writes to Mary, 'Startle not I beseech you at the title, for it is yours and none but yours, & my pen may be pardoned for writing what is so deeply engraven in my heart; cast I beseech you an eye of pittye upon your slave, whom your perfections have made the most miserable creature in the world, your vertues have such absolute dominion over my soule that it can think of nothing but M^{rs} Mary Eure. I think that I am writing this at Claydon, but I can scarce beleve it, for there is more of

June 7,
1658.

me at Whitsoune then in Buckinghamshire & you will be persuaded it is so, when I assure you that as often as I make any addresses to my God, my saint, even your sweete selfe interposes betweene my maker and mee. . . . Madam bestow no answers at all on me, but of acceptance & kindnesse: indeed I am capable of noe other, for a deniall from you, & a dagger at my heart are the same thing.'

Mary herself has not the smallest taste for flirtation, and she writes back, not to Edmund, but to his father. 'Sir, June 21, 1658
. . . tis my petition you will pleas to use your endeavor to divert my cosen your son from persisting farther. . . . Pray tell him itt is hard to force an affection; he will not find mee so pliable as I beleive he expects and I would unwillingly have him venture upon so fruittles a trouble, for I take noe pleasure in severty, neither am I so tame as to be compelled from my resolution, this is truth, and I am the more induced you will believe itt because your self deales so truly with all the world' Sir Ralph replies: 'Deare Cozen, I will not July 22, 1658.
say you are a hard Mistris, well knowing your owne Hart must needes prevent mee, nor shall I presse you to make my sonne happy, since you see positively declare against it; for tis impossible to force affection, and where that's wanting there can never be a true contentment . . . Noe, noe, sweet cozen, few or none have that absolute mastery over theire owne passions as to love or unlove, either whome, or when they list; nor can that love be real that is at such command. Therefore I presume you will not exact a greater obedience then he, or any man living (that loves you truly) can performe, but rather (since you doe not listen to him) leave it to time, and his owne sad thoughts, to loosen that which your owne merrits have rivetted soe fast within him.'

Well might Mun say that his father had 'writ a very handsome letter' for him, and Mary must have felt her kind old friend to be quite a broken reed, when she found that he sent her enclosed another passionate appeal from her irrepressible admirer. 'Madam, I must begg leave to bemoane July 22, 1658.
the prodigious method of my fate, that my mistrisse doome should be conveyed to her servant by the hands of his owne

father, since the greatest malefactor in the world receives his sentence in prison, but the causes thereof assigned have put even my soule upon the racke, your resolution not to marry was fatall enoughe, but the addition (of never him), and the causes why, have commanded mee to recollect all my thoughts and words, to survey all my letters and actions in relation to your deare selfe with a most rigid and censorious eye, and let me never see the face of God or yours, if I can deserve the least atome that lookes towards importuntye or much less force. . Dearest Mistriss give mee leave to wish from the botom of my heart, that there never be other force offerd to you then what may proceed from mee. for the full enjoyment of your content is the greatest happiness and dayly prayer of, Madam, your most passionate vassall and devoted slave Edmond Verney.'

Sept. 1658. Watchful of every chance of communicating with Mary, Edmund (who has heroically refrained from writing to her for full three months) appeals to Colonel Henry Verney, who is staying at Whitsonding, to help him, but Henry replies that he has tried 'all his little witts,' but that he would undertake as soon to empty the sea, as to persuade Mary to marriage. He offers this miserable consolation: 'I shall make it my study night and day in my little Progresse to finde out a lady suiteable to thy liking and merit.'

Sir Ralph cannot give up hope, he writes of Mary as a jewel, there is no girl in England from whom he should expect so much happiness for his son, himself, and his family. In December Mun is again tormented by a ray of hope; he and his father are going to London, and Aunt Sherard 'has writt him word lately that she intended to be there about the same time with him, and that she would only bring my mistriss along with her and leave the residue of her family behind; methinks I see somewhat auspicious coming upon me,' writes the poor fellow; 'my father looks upon me also with a gracious eye,' and he resolves that Mary shall not leave town without seeing him.

By this time Sir Nathaniel and Lady Hobart and many other relations have been drawn into this tragi-comedy of

'Love's Labour's Lost.' 'For your resolution,' Sir Nathaniel writes, 'to goe in person to receive your sentence, pardon me, I can by noe meanes approve of it. Except it bee to make the Captaine drunk and then perhaps he will beate your Aunt, which will bee some satisfaction; but to be serious. When I consider how the sweet innocent Virgin will be exposed, you cannot imagine how it afflicts mee, if you forgive her obedience (as you say you doo) why will you trouble it; can you find in your heart to be a witness of the confusion and disorder which your presence will occasion? . . . Noe, deare cosin, as you love honor, let mee conjure you not to doe a thing soe unhandson, soe unmanly.' So that scheme fell to the ground, and Mary returned unmolested to Whitsondine.

In January Sir Ralph and Edmund are together in town; the latter, sick with hope deferred, still insists that Mary ought to grant him a personal interview before giving him a final answer. Sir Ralph writes to Mrs. Sherard that on 'Wednesday last' Mun came to consult him about send-Jan 17,
1659. ing his man to Whitsondine with a letter. Sir Ralph thought that 'hee was sufficiently diswaded from it, but on Friday night when I was going to Bed, hee came to me againe & told me his intention was to send away his Man the very next Morning, uppon which (when I saw him soe resolved) though I cast some new Rubbs in his Way, I did noe more oppose it.' The messenger went, but this time he took 'neither Scripp nor Scrole nor Message' from Sir Ralph. Nothing could be colder than Mary's reply to Edmund. 'Sir, I much wondre my wrighting should not as well satisfie you as my speaking (unless you thinke me so foolish that I cannot sett downe my owne sence). My admitting you to Whitsondine would perhaps be taken for some smale incourigment which I am resolved shall never be given you by your servant, Mary Eure.' Mrs. Sherard is 'shewer' that Mall will not change her mind, and hopes that Mun will no longer 'prosicewt' his suit.

This might be taken as conclusive. Another match is proposed to him, with a daughter of Lady Springet, who lives 'within 5 miles of Chaford in the Chiltons of

Buckinghamshire.' Edmund, weary of suspense, and held, as he says, in the 'Padlock of Necessity,' makes some languid inquiries about the young lady, whether she be 'of a gentle and grave behaviour'; but he still thinks that he ought not to take any final step without having seen Mary face to face. He tries to persuade his father to lend him horses to go into Rutlandshire; this he utterly refuses, though Mr. Butterfield is won over by Mun's arguments, and they both give Sir Ralph 'reason enough whereby I was bound to go, but that never mooves him when he has no mind to it.' Mun finds that if he goes at all, 'it must be as a rebellious sonne & a runaway,' which would not recommend him at the journey's end, and besides 'horses good & able enough to carry him with credit are hard to bee found among hackenees.' In March, strange to say, the mother does not wish the matter to be considered as at an end: 'I shall contrive some waie this somer for your son to see my M. E.'

Henry recommends Lady Longueville's daughter, and Sir Ralph has heard in July about a rich Mrs Utbut in the City; but Mrs. Utbut's demands are too big, and she does not wish her daughter of fourteen to marry for three years. Mun feels no regret that it comes to nothing; 'a vertuous gentlewoman is by farre to bee esteemed and preferred than the richest cittizen in England'

July 29,
1659.

Mrs. Sherard and Danby *père* have quarrelled over settlements, even the young man's 'carrig' has not been all she could desire, and Edmund reports that she has been to London 'to put a period to Mr. Danby's businessse,' but the perverse Peg feels more warmly towards him as her mother cools. Mrs. Sherard then asks Sir Ralph and Edmund to go with her into Yorkshire, and when they decline, as they have guests at Claydon, she proposes to send her daughters there, to give Edmund full opportunity 'to try what he can work upon Mall's spirit,' though, her mother adds, she still thinks she would not change her condition to be a 'Queene'! Sir Ralph is full of hospitable plans; he trusts that Peg Fust will come too, and he will send his coach to meet 'the three virgins' at any place appointed; 'My Sister

Aug. 9,
1659.

Gardner brings Preshaw heather, and Sister Elmes, Sister Pen Denton, and Brother Harry meet her here—doubt not want of lodging, for the virgins are resolved to ligge altogether.' Edmund is amazed that Mrs. Sherard 'having long since extinguished and buried the least sparke of desire that way, should of herselfe in a manner rekindle and rake it up againe.' 'I am sory that my first meeting with my mistrisse must be at my owne house where I cannot without breaking the rules of good manners give her back her rude letter with reproache.' He is embittered, but only for a moment, for his heart is full of joy when he thinks she is really coming, 'and I heare a bird sing I shall have her at length.'

But the visit is never paid, Mall manages to fall sick, and is frequently blooded. Mrs. Sherard writes in October that 'the seson of the year is past for jurneys of plesheur,' though she had three times prepared her daughters for a start, and in November she announces Peg's marriage to Sir Ralph in these terms: 'One of them is disposed of now, I bles God for it—as you have ever bin hur very great frind soe pray will you continew it and advis her to complye with her husband and not to shuffill him off, after shee hath had him a time, as she hath don some others besides my selfe.' In December she is a little pacified; she thinks that Peg is doing very well with Mr. Danby, and that he is 'a juditious & a discreet man, and but that he hath a tiroke [Turk] to his father, he might have a large income now', her news is a little mixed, for 'the anibaptis are flocking northwards,' and the hard frost prevents her sending him 'som goosebirye trees.'

Mun writes to Mrs. Sherard once more to ask her intentions: 'without ostentation be it spoken, Thoin: Danby will not thinke himself disparaged if Mun Verney professe himselfe as capable of the yonger sister as he is of the elder.' Her reply is to invite Edmund and his father to keep Christmas with them at Whitsondine, 'tho' I do not interpret this invitation as any good omen,' writes poor Mun

In February 1660 he tells his father 'that there remaines in me a hankering after my old Mistriss, but truly I

perceive not the least symptome whereby reason dares without vaine & foolish presumption elevate my hopes. I assure myselve that there is noe other proposall enterteyned, but if there bee I must beare it patiently considering that I can in no way hinder it' In April 1660 Captam Sherard has been chosen Knight of the Shire for Rutland, and his wife and Mary are going to town, where Edmund expects to meet them. In August he asks Dr. Hyde to pen another letter for him, for 'tis not possible for any one to be more acute & sublime,' making one more passionate and persuasive appeal to his mistress, pointing out his long and faithful courtship, his humble behaviour, and absolute submission to her will in not importuning her, though his eternal happiness depends on her answer, 'all this set forth in your noble strayne may perhaps work some effect if anything canu.' But another year goes by and at the end of 1660 Dr. Hyde can only condole with his friend that Mrs. Sherard is still making 'such varietyes of exceptions and scruples when this Resolution owned would have been taken for a peremptory answer,' and that after '3 yeares tricks & attendance' the Lady has not been 'with soe much aloe obteyned'

In an old family pocket book, recently found amongst some lumber in the smoking-room at Claydon, the first entry is as follows, in John Verney's hand: '*Marriage 1663, July 15. Mary Eure and William Palmes of Lindley Yorkshire in St. Martin's by Dr. Robert Townsend.*' The sisters quarrelled so bitterly respecting the occupation of the old Jacobean mansion at Malton of which they were co-heiresses that in 1665 it was actually pulled down under a writ of partition and divided stone by stone between them. In 1712 Mary's son William Palmes sold the manor with the lodge and the ontrance gateway to Sir T. Wentworth, from whom it descended to Earl Fitzwilliam. There is a begging letter from Palmes in later years, with a copy across the back of it of a prompt and curt refusal from the 'Cousin Verney' at that time owner of Claydon: his sentimental references to his mother and the affection of old times awake no response in the home of which Mary had so persistently refused to become the mistress.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

JOHN VERNEY, THE INDUSTRIOUS APPRENTICE.

1653-1662.

THE career of Sir Ralph's second son, John Verney as portrayed in the old letters, gives us as complete a picture of the progress of the industrious apprentice of the seventeenth century as Hogarth's famous series does of the eighteenth century, and with results even more splendid than the wedding with the merchant's daughter and the Lord Mayor's coach of Hogarth's highly moral cinema. Our apprentice becomes a baronet, a landed proprietor, and a member of Parliament; and at last in the final scene his linen cap has been transformed into a viscount's coronet (with an earldom in prospect for his heirs), and we leave him with all that 'should accompany old age—as honour, love, obedience, troops of friends.'

Virtue herself stands aghast at the material rewards she has heaped up, and we feel more affection for the elder brother, with his blighted hopes and wasted opportunities, than the younger inspires with all his success and prosperity. But the boy must have had no common strength of purpose who, in the evil days of the Stuart Restoration, could set his face so resolutely to a life of humdrum industry. Other youths of good family, his cousins and contemporaries, were idling away their lives, pretending to work at the bar or struggling for a place at Court, while some, like 'Cousin Hals' and 'Cousin Turville,' even 'took to the road' and ended with the gallows. Nat Hobart, John Stewkeley, and many of Sir Ralph's best friends had sons who, not attaining to such a melodramatic end, yet brought nothing but debt

and disappointment to their fathers' doors. If there was an absence of romance in the life of a man whose best years were devoted to the making of money, other fathers may well have envied Sir Ralph a son who at fifteen chose his own profession, who enjoyed his work as other men did not enjoy their pleasures; and whose aspirations were so reasonable, and plans so well laid, that Fortune could not feel herself justified in frustrating them.

A pleasant, happy child, little Jack was welcome everywhere. In his baby days he had trotted after his mother, singing and chattering, and cheering her solitary progress through the empty rooms at Claydon. At ten years old Aunt Sherard writes of him: 'I have chosen Jack to be my galant, and I think I have as fine A one, as any in the towne.' Their precise and methodical father always leant upon John while he was inclined to depreciate Edmund. But his partiality bred no ill-will between the brothers, who were throughout life the best of friends.

March 30,
1654.

At an age when little boys are apt to be equally trying to their garments and guardians, Luce Sheppard wrote, 'Mr. John hath kept his clothes in so good order, I have not had to buy anything for him: next weecke I will send him againe to scholle, alththough wee are great gainers by his sober company; yet wee must consider him that hee losse not by ours.'

Before his return from Blois, Sir Ralph had been pondering over this question of Jack's schooling. He was not in love with the new doctrines, and what we should now call a Church School was liable at any moment to have its light extinguished. By a stringent ordinance passed in 1654, ministers and schoolmasters 'who are or shall be Ignorant, Scandalous, Insufficient, or Negligent,' were to be ejected or restrained from teaching. It was hard indeed to find a schoolmaster with Royalist and Episcopal leanings who could not be brought under one or other of these categories. Under conditions so precarious, the Rev. Dr. James Fleetwood kept a school at Barn Elms in Surrey. His cousin, Charles Fleetwood, and his brother

George were amongst Cromwell's strongest supporters, but he held firmly to the old opinions. It does not appear why Sir Ralph preferred a private to a public school; his brothers had been at Winchester, the Stewkeleys had a boy there, and the Doctor thought it 'a very fitt place for Jack'; perhaps he was afraid of the well-known Puritan principles of Warden Harris.¹

Aunt Sherard writes from Whitsondine that if Sir Sept. 1653.
Ralph does not mind 'a scoole soe far off of London, here is a very good one within 7 miles of me, at A plas called Uppingham;² the master hath the report of A very gentille man, and if you send him this waies, I will have a care of him, for I can nevrr dow enoufe for you, for the care you have had of mine;' . . . 'the scoolmaster,' she writes again, 'is comended for a sivill and A well bred man, which I know will be very yousful to your young inounseer.' But Sir Ralph did object to the distance from town, and Jack was sent to Barn Elms.

The first leaving home for school is a sad ordeale, and it must have been hard indeed to Jack. His ignorance of schoolboy traditions, his little 'french aire' and foreign accent, so much admired by Luce Sheppard and his cousins, and the very cut of his clothes, no doubt exposed him to unsparing ridicule in the rough young world of those days; 'our schools doe Cow and over awe him,' the Doctor writes, and six months later Mrs. Isham says, 'All y^e falte I could find in him, he was y^e sobrist youth that ever I did

¹ There was an old connection with the school in both families; an Edmund Verney was a Winton scholar in 1508, and a Richard Stewkeley, of Hawkey, Hants, in 1505. John Potonger was headmaster in 1653, and was succeeded by William Burt from 1654 to 1657; but the headmasters were little more than ushers during the Commonwealth, the wardens were the great men. I am indebted to G. M. A. Hewett, Esq., of Winchester College, for this information.

² Francis Meres of Trinity, Cambridge, was Headmaster of Uppingham, 1641 to 1660, as Mr. R. N. Douglas, of Giggleswick School, Yorks., informs me. Whitsondine is quite ten miles off, another instance of the 'computed distances' in the old letters being shorter than the measured miles.

see, but my hope is that he had more metill in my absence than I could perswad him to in my presence. 'Dr. Fleetwood, his wife, and Queen Kate scold grievously, that Monsr. Jehan is kept noe better in cloaths.' To be correct in all matters of school etiquette was doubtless as important in the seventeenth century as it is in the twentieth, and a special sort of taper was just then in fashion at Dr. Fleetwood's. 'Je vous prie,' Jack writes, 'de manvoier de la chandelle de cire entortillé, car tous les garçons en ont pour brullay et moy ie n'en ay point pour moy.' Jack's diligence is commended by his master; he is 'very ingenious and quick in understanding Arithmetick, wherein he hath made a very good progresse.' But Dr. Fleetwood's authority was tottering, and before Jack had completed a second year, his master was prohibited from teaching as 'a delinquent.'

March
1655

May 21,
1656.

'It is a generall concern,' wrote Doll Locke, 'the puting to silence thos good men, I pray God rase them frinds, and give us memory and constancy to live as we have bin taught' Her wishes were fulfilled; the doctor was forthwith engaged by an old acquaintance of the Verneys, formerly Lady Mary Villiers, daughter of the great Duke of Buckingham, now widow of a devoted Royalist, James Stuart, first Duke of Richmond. She was left with her own boy and girl to educate, and her husband's orphan nephew, Charles Stuart, Lord Aubigny, whose father had fallen with Sir Edmund Verney at Edgehill. Lord Aubigny was the same age as Jack Verney; Esme Stuart, the Duke, was younger, after his premature death, his cousin succeeded him as third Duke of Richmond. Dr. Fleetwood was well provided for as tutor to these boys, till the Restoration made his opinions orthodox once more, and advanced him to the Bishopric of Worcester.

Dec. 1655.

Anne Hobart, always prompt to befriend Ralph's belongings, writes: 'I hear "swet Jack" must be sent far away by the Dockter; if you send him to me . . . he shall be carefully locked to as if he war my dearest child . . . If you will, he shall goo every day an hour to Mr. Castalon at my nes Heulls and he shall hear him red laten - for french my

hus will prat with him . . . and he may larn to dance, so he will not quit los his tim' Dr Denton is full of schemes for 'placing Jack,' and his other nephew, Jack Fust. 'I have Dec 13, 1655 spoken with Ld Mulgrave's chaplain (who teaches his son) to take the care of one or two, who saies for my (but sure he meanes his owne) sake, if it may be soe contrived to all contents, he will. The man I beleove is very sufficient in parts, and for ought I know reasonable moderate in his opinions. The most difficult will be to place one or other neare to him; the best place is Kersey's, but whether neare enough I doubt.' 'There is an inconveniency called play if togeather,' the Doctor adds, but he is sanguine enough 'to hope that happily that may be prevented by Kersey and others. . . . One other considerable inconvenience there is, which is that I doubt he will not be able to attend them, nor they him, above two or three houres a day, espotially this winter time. There is yet another which is that haply the chaplain may return (which depends on my Lord's augmentation of his salary) to Cambridge in the springe.' . . . 'Triplett who is to reside and teach at the Dutch Jan 7, 1656 ambassador's, has also offered to take Jack: he will not care for above 8 or 10 at most.'

Mr. Kersey (who was already known to Sir Ralph) wished it to be understood that he did not profess to give a commercial education, and that if the boy were 'to be fitted for a merchant or other trade, the best and readiest way is to place him at Board with such as make that businesse only their profession, which, in regard my imploymment is for the most part abrowd, I doe not undertake. But if his desigues is only to learne some thing in the Mathematiques, I shall doe him what service I am able.' As Edward Fust decided to send his Jack to Mr. Kersey's, Sir Ralph was willing to do the same: they were to pay twelve shillings a week each. Dr. Denton describes how 'Mons. Jehan's hart is here, and his body at this time. the 2 Johns doe not love to be asunder.' 'Jack hath noe mind to be at Lady Hobart's; Fust and he have not parted all this Christmas, sometimes here night and day, and sometimes there.' At Mr. Kersey's

Jan. 1656

it appears that the boys must 'ly in a garrett, he havinge noe other lodging but the dininge roome and the chamber against it w^{ch} he cannot sever, and they'l be about 8s. a weeke more' Sir Ralph 'had rather pay more then let Jack be in a cold garrett, considering the extremity of the season . . . Uncle Ifust will be of the same minde for his son too.' The father and uncle do their best in exhorting the pair to content themselves with a moderate amount of mischief, but Sir Ralph doubts 'the 2 young ones will bee to crafty for us old ones, and doe little there but play together, therefore I shall desire to send Jack to schole againe, with all y^e speed that may bee . . . I pray read Jack's letter and charge him to obey it.'

Two schools are now recommended, at Hammersmith and at Kensington, 'either of those places are very convenient, if the Masters are good and carefull.' The master at Hammersmith has 'leave to teach,' but Mr. Turberville of Kensington is finally chosen. Sir Robert Fenn, who lives next door, says he 'is Master of French, Italian, Greeke, and Latine, and of Musicke, and he thinks him a very good schoolmaster.' Dr. Denton adds, 'You will easily ghesse how fitt Kensington is for Jack, if all will be taught as is pretended unto.' Dr. Denton is 'not very fond of his master's phitiognomy, yet I find Dr. Hodges the vicar of Kensington hath 2 sons there, and Baron Steele one son there. The Dr. lives in the towne, and the Baron hath a brother livinge in the towne, w^{ch} makes me hope he is better then he lookes for. Aunt Abercromby's boy was also at this school.' Aunt Doctor replenished Jack's wardrobe, and 'made choise of a very good chamber and . . . tooke order to have it and his beddinge aired.' 'He hath yett noe chamber fellow, but there is expectation of one of his old comrades and he makes choyse of him if he come.' Jack remained there three years. 'I am very sorry,' Mr. Turberville writes, 'it was not my happiness to have knowne him sooner. I would be loth by extenuating of others abilities to magnifie mine owne. But certainly much more might in the tyme he spent at Barne Elmes and Fulham have bin

Dec. 30,
1656.

infused into his capacity, yet I doubt not but to give you a very sufficient assurance of his proficiency in a small tyme, both of his amendement in his writing, y^e mastery of his grammar and an indifferent Latine Author, his preservation of the ffrench and y^e command of his Violl, which I had rather you should imbibe with your owne eares then depend uppon my naked assurance. I hope your eldest sonne, with whome he now keepest his Christmas, can and will by his observacion afford you a large testimony. To attaine to all this, and to crowne his actions, one thing more I must insert that (in reality I speake it) he is very laborious and industrious to redeeme y^e tyme that is past and irrecoverable, and very observant of my advice, which are all as I conceive great symptomes of answering your expecta^{ti}ons.'

Jack's diligence in his studies, however, did not always come up to Sir Ralph's strict standard. 'Truly Sr,' Jack writes, 'I doe mitily wonder how you should find me soe negligent towards my learning. I verily beleuve it was last Saturday when I came to London; but if you can afford a little time to riede on further you shall see . . . For that day I was at Winsor and bake againe, a horse Backe with my Master's consent, and not onely me, but also 4 other young Gentlemen and our Usher, for my Master would not trust us alone, and I had done some of my Busenesse on friday night, Because I would not goe and lose all Saturday morning; now Saturday in the after noone wee doe alwaise playe, and therefore I doe straingly wonder how that negligence should bee soe found for to lye in my Bosome. Indeed I should bee very glad for to see you heere and also my most Dear Brother for to accompaine you along This pleasant Roa le.'

Music was a part of every gentleman's education, the Elizabethan opinion still happily prevailing, that it is the 'natural sweeter of our sour life, in any man's judgement that is not too sour,' and Jack had a real love and aptitude for it. His mother's sweet singing and guitar-playing must have been associated with all his childish recollections of her, and he wrote to his father from school asking him 'to bestow the

gittarre which was my Mother's on mee you did give it mee when you went out of France, and then when I came over, you sayed I should not have it because it would bee broken att schoole; that was a good reason, for wee lay 18 in a Chamber, but att this Schoole wee have but two to a Chamber, and wee keepe our Chamber doores loket and therfore noe body comes in but them which wee have a minde to lett in, nay and besides if they should come into the Chamber I have a Closet where I could putt it, but I am shoore there would bee noe mides, if there laketh a key unto it, I will have owne made. Heere is owne thing more is to bee putt in, that is if my brother would have it then I doe not petition it of you, but hee hath a very good owne of his owne' [there were at least five guitars at Claydon], 'and I am shure hee would not bee my hindrance of it. That Gittarre which is in the wooden casse is of noe sound att all almost, and then it is very ugly; it is very corse and rude, and I am sure that you will not use the other which I demand if you please. . . . The Wioll hath putt mee in love with all sorts off musikes. My Master doth see mee proccede soe much of the Wioll that hee hath promised mee to teach mee for to play of the Lute when the Deyes growe longer; hee hath also lent mee owne of his Wiolls this Christmasse for to practise on.' Sir Ralph notes on the outside of this appeal, 'I told him he should have it, or as good a one, but bid him let it rest till I come upp.'

Oct. 29,
1657.

Aug. 18,
1657.

Nov. 1656

'I sent Jack to Doll,' writes Dr. Denton, 'that she might be an ey witness how fast he growes and might bring y^e the tale and tidings of it', Aunt Sherard says 'he grows lawle'; and Pen declares that 'he looks so faire that if he ware in woman's apparill he must look lovely in it.' His care of his dress is in marked contrast to Mun's slovenliness: 'Mr. Denton the Taylour hath brought mee a sute of closes of the same Cloth that my Cloke is off: hee hath also brought mee a sote with a pair off uppur stokings, and a pair of under reade stockings.' . . . 'I doe lake some blacke rubin for to make mee some cuffestrings and shooststrings. I have bought already one paire of each, but they are now almost worne

out, and therefore I shall take one paire of shoosting against chrismas whether I goe to London or noe . it costeth me but a grote a yaid. I doe also take a hatt against christinas, for my ould hatt which I have now is full of holes in the crowne of it.'

'We shall make hold with out y' leave to have him here ^{Jan 8, 1657} this Xstmas,' the Doctor wrote, but Jack's conscience was not quite at ease. 'I hope you will not be angre att my being att London, there is none of the schollars left att Kensington but my Masters sonne, which is but a very litle Lade of noe company att all, and my Brother was very willing I should bee with him.' Jack goes 'to eat a fritter on Shrove Tuesday' at the Doctor's, these family visits paid and received, and an occasional ride, seem to have made up the sum of his amusements. Later he had an attack of ague, and his master's son died of the small-pox 'It was out of ^{Nov 19, 1657.} our house that hee Died; hee was buried on the 11th day of this moneth,' Jack writes, 'but there is noe danger of any further proceeding.'

Jack himself was not satisfied with his schooling; he was fifteen when he wrote of his wish to be bound 'apprintice ^{June 1657.} unto some very good trydesman, and I doe know Lords sones which must be apprintices, and theire elder brother is worth 5 thousand pounds a yeare; as for example my Lord Cossellton' [Castleton].

Sir Ralph destined Jack for the bar, and was not desirous that he should have a purely commercial training; he had much else to occupy his mind, and at eighteen Jack is still complaining that he is taught little that is of any practical use. His father had him home for the summer, and the boys had a happy time together and paid a visit with their father to Sir Roger at Wroxall. After Mun's return to London, Jack writes a piteous lament from Claydon; 'out of this ^{May 1659} greivous Dull and Sadd, Lamentable Mournfull place I doe send you foolish nonsensicall lines, which truly I am ashaamed to send from so Hideous a plaice (for lacke of your Compaynye) to see Jolly a place as London. Melampo and Sylvio present there sarvises unto you and that most

May 1659

Respectively Wee have not a Ducke more now then when you was here, yett there is an honest Moorehen doth sitt upon foure eggs in a Bush att y^e side of y^r Killhouse Pond, w^{ch} I hope will come to a good Providence for that y^e Pond is Payled in ou y^e Highway side. Two of your Claydon Lasses are gonne, for Walter King's daughter is married, there is owne, an John Roads his wife is dead (last night), there is y^e other. I know not what you would have more, for you have all the Newse att Lovely London, and likewise in the countrey, if you would know any about the Bassa [Pasha] of Aleppo you shall, but it must bee about 7 or 8 yeares hence.' Jack in the meanwhile read with Mr Butterfield, who wrote of him. 'Mr. John is very civil and studious in his way, and if he prove no great clerke, I am perswaded he will prove a very honest civill gentleman and you may have much comfort in him.' But this was not at all Jack's idea of getting on. He attacks his father again and again about perfecting his education, because 'one must have some living now adayes.' Sir Ralph so far consented to Jack's schemes as to send him to a Mr. Rich, who teaches merchants' accounts, reserving his final decision till he had taken more advice.

Sept. 1659.

It was not difficult to be taught classics, but arithmetic was a branch of wisdom to be dug for more than for hid treasures; Jack would willingly give all that he had to acquire it, 'although it would bee but (as it were) a cromme or bitte in a loafe.' Sir Ralph asks Mr. Wakefield of Edmonton to give him an opinion 'With regard to an apprenticeship.' He replies, 'I doe nott know as these uncertayne tymes are, whom to advise you too, though I have very dilligently enquired of divers. The Spanish Trade att present you know is loste, w^{ch} was almost a 4th pth of our employment. To the east country and Hamburg trade you know I was brought up myselfe, w^{ch} is accompted the surest trade; Butt neither my Broth^r nor my selfe, could find any great good to bee done by itt; only some Auntient Rich-men, who followes itt as close as the Pack-Horses goes weekly; for the Barbadoes, New England, and all the

Ilands, though many getts money by that trade, yet I should never advise any ffreind of myne to breed up his sonne too itt. And for the Turkey East and West India Trade, without itt bee some perticular men that have the knacke of itt, nott one in 3 of them thrives, soe that those w^{ch} doe itt makes them soe high that they aske and have 500*l.*, and sometymes more with an apprentice, w^{ch} makes mee conceave myselfe lesse able, and itt to bee of more hassard and difficulty then ever anything you putt mee upon before. Itt being high tyme, if you intend yo^r sonne for a merchant speedily to looke out for a Place for him; Hee being now very well growne, and 18 yeares of Age. For w^{ch} reason I have knowen some men to refuse the taking of an Apprentice.'

By the end of 1659, Jack was rewarded by obtaining the long-desired position of merchant's apprentice. Mr. Wakefield, the pessimist, had failed to find an opening, but Sir Roger Burgoyne, who had a brother in the City, agreed, after careful inquiry, with Mr. Gabriel Roberts, a London merchant 'trading to the Levant seas,' to receive Jack, with a premium of 400*l.*, 'the same sum my brother had from Sir James Harrington.' Sir Ralph further bound himself to Mr. Roberts for 1,000*l.* A copy of the bond still exists, and the printed indenture, signed by Sir Roger, John Buckworth, and Gabriel Roberts. The terms of it are very quaint, stringent, and minute. The agreement is for seven years. Jack is received at once for a fortnight on trial. 'For his clothes,' Sir Roger writes, 'Mr. Roberts is to finde him after those are worn out that he carries along with him, whether on this side the sea or the other.' Sir Ralph then came up to London, the seal was set to the bond, and Jack was really an apprentice at last. The choice of his master proved a very fortunate one. Gabriel Roberts came of a Welsh family, natives of Beaumaris, then so thriving a town that a proverb ran that men went to Carnarvon for lawyers, to Conway for gentlemen, and to Beaumaris for merchants.

His father, Lewis Roberts, a distinguished member of the Levant Company, had published in 1638, 'The Merchantes

Mappe of Commerce'—to give the result of 'my own 12 years collections during my abode and employment in many parts of the world.' Finding this knowledge too vast to be contained within the boards of a folio, 'I was constrained,' says the zealous Welshman, 'with the wind-scanted Sea man, to cast about again and limit myself to a narrow scantling.' The author's friend Izaak Walton, his cousin 'Robert Roberts, of Llanvair in Anglesey,' and others, prefaced the book with some complimentary verses; and in this company of bards his little nine-year-old son Gabriel piped in his childish treble. The poetical boy had now settled down to the hard prose of business life, but had kept his warm Welsh heart and generous sympathies.

In allowing Jack to be bound to a citizen of London, Sir Ralph rose superior to many prejudices of his age and his class. The tendency of the Civil War had been to bring the profession of arms once more to the front, as the only one befitting a gentleman. On the other hand such few apprentices as were 'Persons of good Quality' gave offence to the City by affecting 'to go in costly apparel, and wear weapons, and to frequent schools of dancing, fencing, and music.' Proclamations of the Lord Mayor and Orders of Common Council were constantly directed against such irregularities. An apprentice was expressly forbidden to wear lace, embroidery in crewell or metal, any 'cost of needlework, or any silke in or about any part of his apparel'; there was special legislation even for his nightcap. Jack was therefore bound to wear nothing except what his master provided, but if Mr. Gabriel Roberts shared his countrymen's love of music as well as of poetry, we may hope that he relaxed in favour of Jack's cherished guitar the rule which forbade an apprentice to own a musical instrument.

While the New Year 1660 dawned darkly upon England, to Jack the future seemed very bright, for he had planted his foot on the first step of the ladder that was to lead to success and honour. He hoped that his profession would prove no less satisfactory to his father than if he had been 'an Inns of Court Gentleman.' A few weeks later he is

in the full tide of bustle and importance; his presence in the warehouse is so necessary that he can scarcely speak to Aunt Pen though she went up 'unporpos' to see him. 'As concerning the liking of my Trade I assure you that I never delighted in any play when I was at Schoole as I doe in this trade, and alsoe in hearing of Business both inland and outland. I assure you alsoe that if I could doe my Mr. tenn times more servise then now I doe, I should doe it with a real gladdnesse. I hope that I shall soe contrive my businesse that there may bee noe lett in the way to hinder my going Beyond Sea betweenc Michelnasse and Christmasse; although it will be a sad voyage with me for parting from soe Deare a ffather and Brother. . . My Aunt Penelope Denton was here on the 12th inst. And shee would have stayed till I had writt a Letter to have sent by my Uncle Verney, butt I had noe leasure att all to writte, by reason of our selling of a greate parcell of silke weh was that day to bee delivered, and at the day of delivery we have a little trouble in weighing of itt, stripping of itt, and severall other things, as writting bonds, Bill of Parcells, &c, wherefore I could not then writt butt was faine to Acquainte her with my buisnesse, to cause her to be soone gone, for that my Mr. was all the while in the Warehouse with him weh bought y^e Silke.' 'Mr. Roberts doth not att all decline from his former kindnesse, but hath taught mee to keepe Marchants Bookes, which indeed is not ordonary. The Gentlewomen likewise continue in their former kindness unto me, And I still continue att Table with them, soe If you will be pleased (if you thinke fitt) this lent to send mee any sort of your pyes to Give unto them, I shall, whetther or no, continue your most humble and most obedient son and sarvant.' Claydon pies are duly sent; the last 'was a very good one,' John writes, 'but none can tell what it is, some are of opinion of one thing some of another, but most that it is Wild Bore.' The fair, well-mannered youth was no doubt a pleasant addition to the 'Gentlewomen's' society; and they showed their kindness in a practical way a few weeks later by promptly sending for a 'chirurgion' when he had

March 14,
1660.

March 8
1660.

a 'small mischance about 10 of the Clock att night; a skillett of hott Lye slipt in the fire, and scalded the hind part of my right legg.' Jack had frequent visitors, and if Mrs. Gabriel Roberts and her daughters craned their necks out of window to see the young apprentice's fashionable relations, they probably derived some feminine satisfaction in contrasting the shabbiness of Aunt Penelope's attire with their own rich silk gowns and riding-hoods; for the worthy merchant was prospering greatly.

With his arduous duties in the shop, and in the acquiring of his master's 'art,' Jack had but little time for letter-writing or holiday-making during the first eighteen months of his apprenticeship, but he was well content. When he did write it was with such conceits and flourishes as no other pen in the family aspired to.

Sept. 10,
1661.

His mind continually ran on the golden prospect of going 'beyond sea'; and Alderman William Love, who advises Sir Ralph in the matter, writes: 'Since Mr. Roberts's returne to towne, I have discoursed wth him about your sonne, and find him (as formerly) a little troubled that his Brother hath left his affaires in Aleppo with Mr. Sheppard, yet still resolved to send your sonne thither by the first ship (haveing quite laid by the thought of Smyrna) and if Mr. Shepperd will not assist him gratis, then to make the best agreement he can for the first yeare; after which he hopes your sonne will be a nounce Substantive. Towards his charges of setting out I find his M^r enclined to give him ten or twelve pounds (as he saith his Master did him) w^{ch} will not be sufficient, but if he performe in other respects he may be borne with in that. There rests onely to tell you the time of his going, and that is now somewhat uncertaine by reason of Gen. Montagu's late attempt uppon Argies [Algiers]; be the issue whereof good or bad (for we have yet no certain newes) I feare the great Turke will so resent it as to seize our estates in his dominions, if not affront the Ambass^r; perhaps both.'

Oct. 6,
1661.

In the autumn of 1661 Jack went home, and Sir Ralph writes on his return to Mr. Roberts, 'I humbly thanke you

for my sonn's being heere thus long, truly hee had been with you at your time appointed but that some of my friendes pressed mee much to let him stay to goe upp with them, which I hope hath not been to your prejudice. I confesse it was against my will and his too in respect his time was out, but you know woemen are importunate, and will not easily bee denied; therefore I presume you will the more willingly excuse both him and mee.' John follows the events of the mercantile world with keen interest, and in a letter to his father gives a list of merchants who had failed: 'Among ye rest the 2 Wrights of Genoa, having from thence advice of it, (Mr. Bourne's Cousin,) Mr. John Sweeft and Mr. Delbo of London both broke in one day last weeke; alsoe y^e two Mr. Clearks last weeke and severall others. And for y^e honour of red Garter, Sir William Gardener (as it is all over London spoken) just red dy to breake, his bills of Exch: being all protested at Liccorne. (God be thanked) my master had not to doe with any of them.'

Jan. 22,
1662.

Sir Ralph already made use of his 'prentice son in a business capacity, and Jack provides with extreme care and minuteness for the transmission to Claydon of two cases of young vines. With the near prospect of leaving England for many years, Jack, that he might know something of his prospects, wrote to Sir Ralph to ask 'what estate you intend me first and last.' Despite the respectful tone of his letter, and that his son is of age, Sir Ralph is annoyed at any such inquiries. 'You must know that children doe not use to chatechize theire Fathers what Estate they intend to leave them, nor indeed can I tell you if I would, for tis like to bee more or lesse as you carrie yourselfe towards me and towards your Master . . . if you keepe lewd company, and by drinkinge, gaminge, or your owne idlenesse loose your reputation, bee confident you will thereby also loose my affection, and your Portion too. Therefore as you tender my satisfaction and your owne advantage, carry yourselfe soberly, Honestly, and painfully, and then I shall thinke nothing too much for you. Now you know my intention and resolution, God in Mercy direct you for the best.'

Jan. 16,
1662

April 2,
1662.

Sir Ralph might write severely of a breach of filial etiquette, as he understood it, but his affection for the son about to be parted from him for twelve years was very tender and deep. He engaged Soest, the rival of Lely, to paint his portrait, and being dissatisfied with the first result induced him to 'mend' it before Jack left England. In March 1662 'the King hath granted a Convoy to the Levant ship upon those conditions, to depart with a Smirna shipp and all other shippes that can be ready, then to set saile.' 'Most Hon: Father,' Jack writes, 'this is to let you know that the Capt. of the shipp holds his resolution to be in the Downes by the 15th instant; so that now if you please to give order to your Cooke for a Pye, if it comes by the next weekes carrier it will not be to soone; alsoe if you please send me 2 or 3 winter cheeses w^{ch} I hope to carry to Aleppo, they being there in great esteeme. The next week I shall send my things aboard. I suppose by y^e 10th present y^e shipp may depart from Gravesend towards y^e Downes whether I intend to ride post to meet her. I have 3 Bottles belonging to a cellar of myne w^{ch} I thinke to send to Mr. Gapes, there to be fil'd with strong waters. I suppose they all hold somewhat above 3 pintes. Mr. G. Roberts a day or two since gave me 2 sheetes of paper of advise and some other particulars, which at your coming to towne, if it please you, you may see. . . . He intitles it on the backe side, viz. Commission given to John Verney now bound for Aleppo in Siria, upon the Dover Marchant, whom God preserve, Gabriel Roberts.'

April 8,
1662.

Sir Ralph enters into every detail of his son's outfit with his usual careful kindness; Jack agrees to his suggestion 'that the meat baked in Potts will be (as much or) more satisfactory to me than were it in Paste, considering all the reasons noted downe in yours, but espesially carredge, w^{ch} will be farr easier to doe in Pots then in Crust, and I had demanded this way at first but that I don't remienber I ever saw any in that maner at Claydon.'

Mr. Roberts supplied 20*l*. towards his outfit, which cost



Soest pint.

JOHN VERNEY

about 50*l*, including 10*l*. for his outlay on the journey.¹ John had his arms 'sett on his spoon,' he took his 'Viol and a bible servis and a leather case,' costing 8*s*. 6*d*., and Sir Ralph spent as much again in the purchase of Taylor's 'Holy Living and Dying,' 'Bishop Andrewes' Devotions,' Gerard's 'Meditations,' and the 'Imitation of Christ.' The world of books is strangely small. Three of Sir Ralph's four favourites are still alive and doing good service. His father spent the last few weeks with Jack in London, and accompanied him as far as Gravesend, where they parted.

Jack sent a few hasty blotted lines to his 'Ever Hon^d April 29,
Father. . . This is only to present my duty unto you 1662
and to begg your blessing w^{ch} I did not the last night.' He wrote the next day from Deal. 'Yesterday about 6 a Clock I set forward from Gravesend and went to Sidenbourne 18 miles on this side; from thence this morning I departed and came first to Canterbury 15 miles on this side, where I was forced to stay 3 or 4 houres because horses were scarce, and indeed but 2 to be had all over y^e City, and them very deare, soe that I went to y^e Cathedrall and there heard servis said and sung by y^e Coristers; after which I came to Deale, and there found that the Convoy was gone with a Smirna shipp. Here I am likely to stay, for y^e wind is soe contrary that our shipp cannot come over the flatts. Here is not at present any merchant shippes at all; before the towne lieth y^e Monke frygot, now admirall of y^e Downes, as alsoe another of His Majestyes frygots.' To Mun he says: 'For your expences, gifts, and troublesome journey, thanks

¹ 'Noate of divers things provided for Jack's voyage:'

Holland for caps, 'hanketchers,' and doublets	£1	7	0
Lace for the caps		4	9
Cloth for 2 Pair of Socks		3	6
6 Pair thread stirrup stockings		16	0
'2 Garnish of buttons' for 2 Handkerchiefs		3	4
2 Pair of white Stockings		2	0
6 p ^r . of Shoes and 1 pr. Slippers		1	9
7 p ^r . Gloves		9	0
A Sea Bedd and bolster, Rugg, and Pillow		1	17
and Tailor's bill for	£16	10	0

are to small, brotherly affection I have none to add to that w^{ch} I had for you before; retuines in their same kind is for me you know impossible, soe that I must remayne your debtor for everything.' He was delayed till the 4th of May, when he wites his last letter to his father.

'This morning before 8, God willing, if y^e wind holds, I shall set sayle for Livorno whether God send us in safety. truly I am very glad wee shall depart soe soone, for this is a very cut-throat place, and besides for a farther helpe to away with money I was faine to lay in 20s. more for fresh provision, by reason that one of our passengers is fallen sicke and soe wee casted up our money short, soe that wee lay in 6l. a peece Sheepe cost us here 22s. y^e sheepe: hens 3s. y^e couple: barley 40s. y^e quarter: oats 3s. y^e bushell: duckes 2s. y^e couple, etc.; they have not bene knowne soe deare this good while, but there hath beene such great shipping of late that all things are deare. Most of y^e Poultry is now ingrost for the Jamaca shippes, soe that we had much adoe to get 40 couple notwithstanding it is market day at Sandwich. Sir having but little time I humbly begg your blessing, prayers, and leave to be your most humble and most obedient sonn.' Mun's affectionate note in reply to Jack's last cannot have reached him; it was chiefly to say — 'The Love of Heaven be with you and blesse you, my deare brother.'

May 5,
1662

The journey to Aleppo was accomplished in 3½ months. Jack wrote home every few weeks as occasion offered. Having fallen in with a homeward-bound frigate off Cape St. Mary, he has time for a hurried note to his father. 'On May the 6th we mett with the Queene [Catherine of Braganza] and the fleet her convoy, off of Fyrmouth.'

May 14,
1662

June 20,
1662.

The next is from Leghorn. 'This is to advise you of my arrivall into this Port from whence I hope to be gonn in 8 or 10 dayes. I should have given you an account of my arrivall sooner but that I departed for Pisa, Florence, etc., to see those sights w^{ch} are at St. Jn's tide selebrated in the last city, where I have continued this 9 dayes. S^t it being very late at night and myselfe somewhat tyred having come

post this day from Florence (w^{ch} is 60 miles) notwithstanding the heat of y^e weather and y^e Badd horses I shall conclude, assuring you to write you somewhat more larger by some Gentlemen w^{ch} lately came from Aleppo and are proceeding for England over land in 40 Dayes.' He comes across Dr Kirton at Florence, who begs to send his old friend Sir Ralph his 'most humble servis.' Jack reaches Scanderoon on July 26, 1662, 'having toucht noe where but at Cyprus.' The 20th of August finds him arrived at Aleppo, whence he writes to his brother a string of requests; 'the shippes being upon departure,' he ends abruptly. His fair hair that Soest had painted so carefully 'being already almost all come off,' he asks for a wig, and he 'must goe in the Turkish mode before it comes.'

It was a far cry from Mr. Gabriel Roberts's back shop in the City, where the bales of silk were weighed, to the flat white roofs, the domes and minarets of the mosques, and the burning sunshine of a Syrian summer, and we long to know something of Jack's impressions on arrival. The youth who spent the time, while waiting for relays, in attending the choral service in Canterbury Cathedral; and who rode sixty miles of dusty road twice over on bad post-horses, to witness the Feast of St. John the Baptist in the City of Flowers, must have had a mind that was not fed on 'marchants' accompts' alone. It was easier to ask for stirrup leathers and viol strings, than to write down what he felt on leaving the familiar surroundings of the English merchant ship to begin life alone on that glaring foreign shore; and it may be that as he folded and sealed his packet of home letters, his mind's eye was filled, not with the fine Moorish architecture, the strings of pack-camels, and the picturesque crowd of dark-skinned and turbaned figures, but with the homely brick walls, the soft grey skies, and the branching elm trees of Claydon.

CHAPTER XL.

THE NEW DISEASE AT CLAYDON.

1657-1658.

A CERTAIN form of fever and ague, known during the time of the Civil War as 'the New Disease,' swept over several counties in 1657-8, carrying off many familiar faces at Claydon and Hillesden, and uniting in a common death men who in life had long been foes and rivals.

The epidemic broke out in the Claydons at the close of a hot summer, and soon spread to the House. William Gape describes how people are flocking up to town from the country districts to avoid infection. Sir Ralph, on the contrary, who is away on a visit, hurries back to Claydon to do his best for the sick in the villages as soon as he hears of the outbreak. Mrs. Westerholt is ill, and one after another of Sir Ralph's servants and workmen are disabled. 'The Bay Mare is unable to fetch the bricks,' she has been lent 'to Roger Deely, to fetch a surgeon to his sonn, whose Heele is gangreaned.'

Aug. 18,
1657.

Aug. 27,
1657.

The Rector was next attacked: 'I am sorry to heare Parson Aris is in any dainger,' writes Dr. Denton, 'I pray God fitt him and us for life and death. I long to heare of him. There is one dead of the plague this weeke att White chappell.' The Rector's strength did not hold out for many days; he died on August 29. The Doctor is 'heartily sorry for Honest Parson Aris. I doubt she will not live longe after. For all the little Peekes that were betweene you, I wish noe worse may succeed.' 'I am confident,' writes Penelope, 'M^{rs} Aris is a very sadd widdow, I pitty her with all my hart.' Sir Ralph desires to have

Aug. 31,
1657.

'the 2 Church Bookes, or any such publique papers or noates concerning the Church or Towne . . . all papers concerning the Parsonage as letters & noates, and all papers or letters concerning any differences between M^r Aris & me, or my Father and Him, that they may be burnt.' Mr. Aris was buried, on September 1, at Middle Clayton, having been Rector of the parish for twenty-seven years. The last time his name appears in the registers, which he had written up so carefully, is in May 1711, at the burial of 'Thomas Faulkener formerly Dairyman & Servant to M^r Aris, Rector,' who had kept his master's memory green for more than fifty years. Ralph Roades, the truculent parish clerk, lived out the century, but his brother the steward, Mr. Aris's doughty opponent and rival, sickened with the same disease.

Sir Ralph writes to Lady Warwick: 'Madame, I had ^{Sept. 17,} not a servant to send to satisfie my selfe of the condition of ^{1657.} your health, for all these parts have been sorely visited, and particularly this very Towne, in soe high a manner, that since I writ last to your Ladishipp, heere hath been 40 or 50 sick at a time, whereof the Parson, and 8, or 9 more are already dead, and at this hower many are dangerously sick, and still sicken dayly. I thanke God my selfe & sonne are well, but (excepting one) there is not a man servant in my house that hath not been very ill, and are yet soe weake, that I am forced to hier others to assist & tend them'; which recalls our own household experiences of the influenza. Mrs. Sherard is in the same case: she herself 'hath gott this new disease, or a longe tertian or a Quarterne, be which it will, it handles her very severely, and there went 7 or 8 one day sick out of her house that came well in.' She herself writes: 'On my well dayes I macke A shift to creepe downe to dner and have a good stomack to my meaght, but I am laine to eaght but A litill.' Sir Roger's family had also 'drunk pretty deeply of that cup.' The Doctor considers that 'London is the healthiest place.'

The same epidemic is mentioned by Lady Fanshawe,¹ as 'a very ill kind of fever of which many died, and it ran

¹ *Lady Fanshawe's Memoirs*, p. 125. London, 1829.

generally through all families'; she and her husband and household fell sick of it: she ate 'neither flesh, nor fish, nor bread, but sage posset drink, & pancake or eggs, or now and then a turnip or carrot.' Lady Hobart had a more comfortable prescription. 'If you have a now dises in your toun pray have a car of yourself & goo to non of them; but drinck good ale for tis the gretis cordall that is: I live by the strenth of your malt.'

Will Roades's illness ran its course, and the anxiety about him was increased by the fact that Dr. Denton was unable to be with him. The Doctor had been overworked all the autumn. 'I was at Malden, where there is a very sick house,' he wrote, 'Charles & Dick [Goode] both sick, but recovered and about the house; & yett last night I was sent for post [from his farm on the Fens] for that Charles had fainted away. W. Gape is now with him, & how he doth I know not. Ben Moorwood, who married his sister, I doubt will dye of this new disease, there's alsoe 10 sick att this time in Mr Harvey's house. It reigns generally, I pray God blesse us all & fitt us for life and death.'

Sept. 19,
1657.

The Doctor went on to Thame Park to attend his old friend Lady Wenman and a young Hobart, who was taken dangerously ill of small-pox while on a visit to her, ' & it's now my business to get a lodginge for him at Thame soe fearfull are they here.' He wrote thence: 'I longe to heare how Will & Michaud & Charles doe, and what you have done to them. . I see noe daunger of W^m R: & if he had followed your advice by taking of a vomitt & if that had not done it, then to have beene blooded, I beleeeve he had beene well ere this. It is the best thinge & the surest & quickest he can yett doe, therefore I pray lett him have one yett. 3 full spoonfulls of the vomitinge liquor in possett drinke will doe well, & he may abide 4 the same night when he goes to rest; let him take the weight of vi^{ds} of Diascordium, the next day or the next but one, he may be blooded in the arme about 20 ounces.'

On the same day Sir Ralph wrote a long business letter to Roades. He had been to inquire after the steward's sick

daughter Miller, 'who rested much better this night. I hope she & you will mend too.'

The Doctor, mindful of Sir Ralph's anxieties, writes again from Thame Park: 'Hobart died on wenesday morninge & which is worse, his death was occasioned by 3 daies excessive drinking, he was buried in Thame church, with such decency as these times & my Lord's family could afford. . . . I longe to hear how W^m R dothe. I pray make my excuse to him that I could not see him, for really I am extreame sorry that it fell out at such a time, that I could not possibly stirre, and indeed I have been soe tied to attendance, that I have not made one visitt since I came but to Wheatfields [to the Ishams], & which much discomfitts me I have not one horse that I can bestride with pleasure. Kate, after her love & service to you for your invitation, saies she thought you had more witt, then to invite people to trouble you when your Cooke & the other servants are soe sickly'

Sept. 25
1657.

By the time this letter arrived Will Roades was beyond the help of earthly remedies, and on the 28th of September, within a month of the Rector's funeral, the Steward was laid beside him in the little peaceful churchyard. The loss of these two men was a heavy blow to Sir Ralph, though he had been quite aware of their failings; they had grown up with him, and both Parson and Steward were part of his familiar life at Claydon. 'Old friends are best,' Selden said; 'King James used to call for his old shoes: they were easiest for his feet,' and Sir Ralph agreed with King James.

Roades had gone on with his work to the last, and letters about the estate kept arriving for him during his illness and after his death. But all Sir Ralph's punctuality and preciseness had never made his steward into a good man of business. 'I am much troubled your man Rodes has left your accounts soe imperfect,' writes Nat Hobart, 'but alas poore man he was taken away soe suddenly that I beleve he had not time to perfect them & his owne too.' Of the account he had to render to a higher than his earthly master, we may hope he had not been as unmindful; he

July 28,
1658.

July 28,
1656.

writes in one of his untidy scrawls to Sir Ralph, 'Only let me intreat you to pray for me to god so much as to keep me his servant which is my continual prayer, and then I hop my death will not com suddenly.'

March 29,
1658.

John Roades was as little fit to succeed him in the management of the Claydon estate as Richard Cromwell was to succeed his father in the government of the Commonwealth; but, happier than Richard, the chance was not given him of displaying his incapacity. Sir Ralph took matters into his own hands, and wrote after six months of this experience: 'I have been & still am (besides all my other businesse) on such tickle terms with some of my tenants, who (contrary to my agreements & expectation) endeavour to kick upp 3 or 400*l.* a yeare into my hands at a few dayes warning, that I canot stirre a day from home, having too frequent occation to make new treaties with one or other of them, & haveing noe Bayliffe I am forced to doe it all myselfe.'

Oct 9,
1657.

Willham Gape, the excellent apothecary, was also ailing in that sad autumn of 1657. 'My voyse is lower then ever,' he writes, 'my throate more soare, and which is worst of all I have suffered a great difficulty of breathing this fitt. These are all alarmes to tell mee whither I must goe and that my winter quarters are preparing for mee. God almighty sanctifie all these signes to mee that I may make a right use of his mercyes et fiat voluntas Domini.'

Nov. 17,
1657.

Edmund Verney was ailing also with 'a loathing of meat and queaziness of stomach,' and Dr. Denton wrote quite anxiously: 'We see younge men drop as well as old, and we cannot be too carefull one of another, our number decreasing soe dayly.'

The filling up of the living gave Sir Ralph great trouble; he dreaded above all things that an aggressive Presbyterian or Independent should get hold of it. His neighbour, Mr. Duncombe, had recently appointed a clergyman to his living of Brick Hill, and a minister very distasteful to him had, at the same time, obtained the promise of it from the Government. After a protracted suit, Mr. Duncombe's nominee had been

obliged to retire. Sir Ralph was determined that no applicant should be able to represent his living as vacant, so the breath was scarcely out of Parson Aris's body before he had offered it to the Rev. Edward Butterfield, of Preston-Bissett, of whose talents as a peacemaker he had retained so agreeable an impression. Mr. Butterfield, who was a widower with children, accepted with alacrity; but this was only the commencement of the business. Besides a 'donation or a presentation, or both,' he was to produce a certificate that the parish desired him for their minister. Fortified with all the documents he could collect, Mr. Butterfield went to town to go through the searching ordeal of Cromwell's 'Triers.' The Protector was more anxious to secure ministers of high character and learning than to test their theological orthodoxy by any narrow standard. It was not, therefore, Mr. Butterfield's Church doctrines that were the subject of inquiry, so much as his past life and ministry. The 'Triers' had a wholesome distrust of testimonials, and accepted recommendations from those men only whose personal knowledge of the candidate was both intimate and recent. But having courted a safe obscurity in his rural living, it was difficult for a country parson of the old opinions to find a 'Commissioner Minister' from whom he could obtain the required recommendation.

'At my coming to London,' writes Mr. Butterfield, Sept. 10,
1657.
'missing of the Doctor, I went to Sir Orlando Bridgman who told mee I wanted a Minister's hand to my certificat, and wisht mee to take witnes with mee to deliver in my presentation; so Mr Gape went wth mee about it. Then I was informed the like of the defect of my certificat, thereupon I took my horse intending for the country, but because they told mee I must have some Co^mmissioner Ministers hands, or that were well known to the Tryers; I went to two Co^mmiss: Ministers that I had a little acquaintance wth (not knowing any such neere us) who gave mee this test: that they had some personall knowledge of mee, & did verily beleeve that which the gent: had certified was true. With this I went back to the clarke,

who assured mee this being yet short of the words of the Ordinance, would hardly passe; so I went to a Minister in London well known to the tryers, . . . who gave mee this test: that he had long since known mee to be a person of a godly sober blameles conversation, which are the words of the Ordin. yet by reason of this restrict *long since*, I doubt whether it may be sufficient: there hath beene no full cofmittee since my coming up, so that it hath little retarded my busines, onely it hath much saddened my thoughts and put mee somew^t out of conceit wth the busines. I delivered your letter to M^r Drake, who gave mee very good words, after sent mee a letter to one M^r Cooper, one of the tryers that lives I know not where, and if he can, will be at Westminster fryday. Sir should these yet fail, I would desire you to send this inclosed to our Minister at Preston, and if he can returne it to you or send it up by our Carrier to be heare ready against Wednesday next I shall attend it so long, els I must intreat you to pitch upon some other person as soone as you can that you suffer not by more delay. I am Sir your very sad but true friend & servant.'

Sept 12,
1657.

Sir Ralph loses no time in replying: 'Mr Butterfield,— Last night very late I received yours of the Tenth instant, & have already sent away your letter to M^r Pepps at Preston, who I presume (if hee bee at home) will dispatch your businesse, . . . I am resolved to doe all that in mee lies to place you neare mee, therfore bee not sadd, but rather let this little opposition make you more sollicitous in the businesse, & assure your selfe you shall not bee forsaken by your most affectionate friende to serve you, R. V.'

Mr. Butterfield, having at length satisfied the Triers, found a hot discussion raging, on his return to Claydon, between Widow Aris and her brother-in-law Nick as to the late Rector's liabilities: both appealed to him to settle the dispute. The din of battle lasted several months, apparently to the great satisfaction of the disputants. But another question touched Mr. Butterfield more nearly. The rectory was much out of repair, it would be 'unhabitable for such a crazy person as I am all the winter:' his claim for dilapidations

against Mrs. Aris was a heavy one. He wrote to Sir Ralph in some discouragement. 'I hope God will some way or other ^{Feb 14} ^{1658.} answer my desires, either by enabling mee to undeigoe & execute successfully what I have undertaken, or by presenting some fitter person to your approbation, to whom I shall cheerfully resigne all that little interest I have, & conclude the latter part of my dayes in peace & silence.' Mrs. Aris's voice seems to be ever ringing in his ears. 'Sir, I have, with as little satisfaction to my selfe as to the parties litigant, composed the matters in suit between Mrs. Aris & Nick Aris, & I have now the 15*l.* controversy in hand, as full of difficulty as the former every whit. How the wit of man should reconcile these contradictions & absurdities, maintained with such high protestations & improbabilities I see not. For my part I despair of receiving satisfaction, yet if things are not too foule, I am resolved to make an end of it. 'Tis pittie the dead man cannot be raised againe to resolve the riddle. I could even venture my Parsonage for satisfaction.' He compounded for his first-fruits, which came to 3*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* Sir Ralph desires to hasten the business, 'for I respect you soe much, & love you so well, that I am confident I shall like Claydon much the better and spend more time there, when you are settled in it.'

Did the gentle Mr. Butterfield, who was nervously anxious to conciliate everybody, find it a task beyond his powers to dislodge Mrs. Aris, to take possession of her old home, and to wring from her the ever-odious charges for dilapidations? Report said that she had taken to her bed with grief and vexation, which must have increased the difficulties of the situation. Whatever the explanation may be, scarce eight months of the lady's widowhood had elapsed before the fresh incumbent, with great submission, laid his heart and fortune at her feet, and married her with the least possible delay. So the ghost that troubled the new Rector's slumbers was laid; and though the dilapidations were further 'ravell'd into' by the Patron and Cousin Dormer, the amount was a matter of indifference, now that Mrs. Butterfield could pay it out of one pocket into the other.

There are few comments in the letters upon the marriage. Aunt Isham lived sufficiently far away to say with a clear conscience that she thought it 'as sutable a mach as could be, but what with M^{rs} Aris' grife & her sicknes I thought it could not a bine so soone. And talkes will goe, for I was tolde all this tattle as she was abeade when she was married . . . but I tolde them noe such thinge . . . but women doe mad thinges sometimes.' It was not the woman who seemed to be doing 'mad things' in the opinion of Claydon, but Sir Ralph prudently held his tongue, and was content to execute his friend's wedding errands in town. 'I would intreat you to remember mee in a bargaine of chaires & stooles for my Parlour,' wrote the Rector, who was refurnishing with great zeal, 'if you happen to light on any you think fitting : & I think 6 pieces of hanginge, if met with accidentally at the second hand, might all things considered be easyest had to furnish up the roome ; but in this as in all other things I am willing to submit to your better judgment.' 'I would gladly bestow a matter of 8*l*. in Wainscot for my parlour,' he wrote again, 'rather then go to a much higher price for Hangings, & then I should like very well this painted lether for a suit of chaires & stooles, & Carpet too for it ; but that may be resolved on timely enough, when the wainscot is ready to set up'

Jan. 8,
1659.

He asked Sir Ralph to consult Dr. Denton about 'Sister Tayler,' who was 'piteously afflicted with a strange infirmity in her stomach . . . that doth still follow her.' The lady, however, to Mr. Butterfield's great annoyance, had not patience 'to expect an answer from London, but must needs send for one of the Mountebanks from Bucks, who tells her she is past physicke, but makes no question to recover her with looking on her, telling her 2 or 3 senseless stories & taking some of her moneys.'

In the troubled months of Richard Cromwell's protectorate, when all England is tossed about with uncertainty, Mr. Butterfield is comfortably settled at Claydon Rectory. 'The dangerous aspect of our state affairs troubles my thoughts not so much in reference to my own condition as

the publique good.' He writes two days before Richard's fall 'Tis a pleasant time in the country & quiet; onely tradeing is dead & most men are full of feares.' Mr. Butterfield became the founder of a dynasty; he and his son and grandson were Rectors of Middle Claydon for the next hundred years, as the marble tablet in the church records

The 'ill wind,' which had at least brought a benefice to a good man, was still blowing in Bucks, and on October 17 1657, the young Squire of Hillesden was carried off. The Civil War had laid heavy burdens upon shoulders too young to bear them, and Edmund Denton, as a mere boy, became the owner of an exhausted estate and of a mansion in ashes. With careless generosity he had squandered his wife's large fortune. Dr. Denton had repeatedly counselled prudence. He wrote to Sir Ralph: 'I know not (though I advised it a
Dec. 11,
1655.
yeare or two since) that Mun's resolution was to leave Bucks & to goe & live like Hermit poore in Glocestershire . . . it is most high time. I have examined his debt & I finde it above 17,000*l*, besides Annuities, shop-bookes etc: soe that I cannot thinke it lesse then 20,000*l*, and it is encreased in one yeare above 1,000*l*. This will eat while he sleepest. We have advised with Ned [Fust] about it very seriously & very sadly you may thinke; & it is concluded that parcymoney will never pay it, noe nor a small sale. His wive's Land must pack, where in his power, which some say will pay 10 others 8, but we reckon betweene both, 9,000*l*. . . . Cowley we say alsoe must pack, & some part alsoe of Hillesdon. This tastes bitter, but rather soe then all. Hee had better expose to sale then be driven to it. . . . It is noe time to have any differences with relations, neighbours, noe not clownes . . . or there will be a quarrel with the whole Bench. I have taken this thorne also out of his foot, to putt it in myne owne. He must not displease, a mere recognisance to him would be his ruine, noe man would dare buy of him, except Robbin Hoods pennyworths,¹ which would be his ruine. It was his & my father's ruine to sell only to pay interest, he hath hitherto but ridden the same horse.

¹ Pieces of land sold for half their value.

I am soe concerned for his condicion that it breakes me many an houres sleepe.' Dr. Denton's fine schemes of retrenchment were seldom carried out.

Aug. 1,
1656.

In the previous summer a hastily scrawled note had reached Dr. Denton from Edmund's next brother Alexander. 'I am much troubled for my Brother [George]. I can hardly persuade the Doctors to come to him, for they say they cannot helpe him. Neither can I procure a Minister to come to him, which troubles me very much hee being so insensible of Dying; for I cannot but lament, & wish & desire the prayers of you all for him, who I doubt cannot now pray for himselfe.' George died the following day. His will is full of affectionate bequests to his brothers and sisters: he desires that his debts should be paid 'out of the moneyes lately received of Richard Berin, Linen draper' He left to 'M^r William Okley 40s. to preach my Funerall sermon,' and desired to be buried 'in the Chancell of the Parish Church of Hillesdon at the discreation of my deare Brother Edmund Denton Esq^r.' In little more than a year his elder brother was laid beside him.

'This particular Mortalyty to this sweet man' afflicts Cary extremely, 'so affectionat a frend as Mun Denton, so faithfull & good humoured A persone is rare to find.' Mrs. Isham also missed her nephew sorely, the older relations could always count upon a welcome at his board. She writes the next spring. 'I sent our nue man to call att Hilsdon & bringe me worde how they all doe, & but that I send to see them now & then, they may be all bureid a Live for any thinge I heare frome them selves: and sure itt would be contente to my minde if I could not thinke of them so much as I doe, but I loved the good man so well as is dead, as I shall love them I feare how ever. I cannot rite noe more itt doth so troble me.'

Alexander Denton, some seven weeks after his brother's death, is at Hillesdon and is anxious lest the widow should break through the strict etiquette of mourning by paying a quiet visit to a brother-in-law, and refers the question to Sir Ralph. 'Sir, My sister Denton having very

Dec. 8,
1657

often upon all occasions most earnestly expressed mee to let her know if either I knew or heard anything shee did, or was like to doe, that might Argue any disrespect to her deare deceased Husband: shee alwaies professing her selfe altogether extream ignorant of these sad ceremonies of mourning; although I am confident most expert in the reallity thereof. And I finding her departure hence to my bro. Woodward so soone as her dolefull moneth is out, to bee by some very severely censured, now her chamber & house & servants are all in theyre black attyre Thought myselfe very much engaged to let her know the sense, if I myselfe knew, whether it would also appeare so bad in the world, or that it were the custome not to remove in such case; of which beeing altogether Ignorant I have therefore made this my Addresse to you . . . earnestly desiring your opinion herein with as much speed & privacy as may bee, what is the custome, & how her departure in this case is like to appeare in the eye of the world.' In the interests of the poor young widow, and her three little boys, we should have preferred to submit the matter to Dr. Denton; Sir Ralph was sure to be on the side of the 'ceremonyes,' but his reply has not come down to us.

Lady Gawdy was celebrating a great event in her family, the marriage of her eldest son Charles to Lady Mary Feilding, 'the pretty daughter of my Lord of Desmond [later Earl of Denbigh] with 4,000*l*.' Doll Lecke complains that he had been too much run after. 'I am sorry for our sex, for thay goe a beging,' but he is 'fixed at last.'

She writes from Croweshall: 'M^r Gaudy was married one Saterday was fortnight and at this time all the company is at Crowshall. You may ges how full our hous is whan my lady & all hir faimily of women ly in the vane rouff over the dining chamber. We have a prety bride & thay are I belive very will plesed with one another. . . . Fines the wine coper & Blaynes brother has bought Gidy hall [Lady Gawdy's own property]: they give 9,000 pound. My dear lady grevs that it should be sould to such mean parsons. . . . All our company is gon to se Helmingham,

Sept. 4,
1657.

Sept. 25,
1657. Sir Lionell Tallemachs hous I stayed at home to right this. . . . My lady is gon with them. . . . The bride & bridgroom desirs your good wishes.' Nothing could be more charming than the welcome Lady Gawdy gave the young couple, when, after their short honeymoon, 'M^r Gawdy brought the Lady Mary home.' Lady Hobart writes 'Now I must let you know the gret fam of dear Lady Gadys entertanment; it is sayd to be as much beyond them all as can be expressed, and in that order, as if thar had bin nothing to be don in the hous, but to wat on the compny. All the contry sent hur in presants she had 4 bras of bucks and fish and fruts and all good things, and when they cam hom, thay war met with in thre mils of the hous, with 6 scor hors of the gentill men and youmen, and at Debnham all the wemin with garlands and flours, and strowed them hom to the hous, whar my Lady and hur compeny and sarvants wated on hur, and the musick folowed her.'

Sept 30,
1657. Two other marriages announced to Sir Ralph by Cousin Stafford interested him extremely. 'The Duke of Bucks is married to Lord Fairfax his dau^r; & the marriage of the Protector's dau^r to Warwick's sonne, is forthwith to bee solemnprized.' 'My Lord Duke is with his biide,' writes Dr. Denton, ' & my Lord Fairfax is come to town to mediate, I hear nothing yet of his reception.' The Earl and Countess of Warwick had become more and more influential in the Protector's Court; the Royalists said that he had made more money 'than any mau who trafficked in that desperate commodity—rebellion.' Cromwell had a real affection for Warwick, and now the marriage of his daughter Frances Cromwell with Warwick's grandson Robert Rich was celebrated with great magnificence and attended by many persons of quality. The country seemed to have settled down under Cromwell's rule; even Henry and his grand friends wish to be reconciled with the powers that be. 'Kirke, My L^d Protector's Rider is dead,' writes Dr. Denton, ' & H. V. would have succeeded, & tried my L^d Richard & Lord Claypole, but it seemes noebody shall succeed.'

Nov. 11,
1657.

Cousin Stafford sends a queer story to Sir Ralph in November. 'I heare Sir Arthur Haselrigg is fallen into a desperate nott, by defending a possession against the sherife and some troops of hoise, which he did beate from a house and lande, which hee had recovered by law, and by a second verdict lost the same againe, and hee pursuing his opportunity upon the sheriff's recess for more aide, possessed himselfe of Newcastle upon Tyne, where in a hostile manner hee defends himselfe. This is Sir C. Packe's newes, which hee related something doubtfully ergo quer : ' This letter was accompanied by 'a bundle of Sweet Briar plants and fine Figg setts,' for which Sir Ralph was to give him in return 'a dozen young wallnutt trees, as many Chesnuts & Almons, fowre young firs and a pyne.' Sir Ralph persevered with his improvements. Mulberry trees and red roses are being planted at Claydon; and '300 Asparagus Plants' arrive from a nursery gardener with some 'Double violetttes blue & white, 100 of goodlie July flowres, sweet Marjoram & Lemon Time, & some Althea Aiborea essence.' There are orders for 'new stone seats, 6 feet 9 inches long and 17 inches broad, and stone stairs in the garden,' and 14 feet of coping-stones for a balcony; and the house is beginning to look so comfortable again, and so well furnished, that Edmund writes in the summer of 1657: 'Of household stuff July 17, —I beleeve few gentlemen have so good or such great store.' 1658. Lady Hobart sends down from London some gilt leather and a piece of 'Pintado' ¹ for 5s. 6d. which she thinks cheap, with 'fringe for the Pentado bed' and some Dutch tiles. Dr. Denton, who is to receive some money for Sir Ralph, writes: 'The gooses feathers will quickly be pulled, therefore be sure you have a Pegasus ready bridled, saddled & plated, & your Jockey ready stript; to carry the enclosed the next day & receave L'argent, but not to bury in Brick & mortar.'

Sir Ralph's next project was to have a deer-park, and

¹ An obsolete word, probably for a mottled stuff, whence the name Pintado for a guinea-fowl. Spanish *pintado*, from the verb *pinlar*; Latin *pingere*.

Oct. 27,
1657

the negotiations begun with Lord Monson in the Fleet Prison for the purchase of deer stretched over several years. Doll Smith writes of some deer offered to her husband: 'From my Lord Gray's park . . . but non but dows, & fawnes, and prickets¹ & prickets sisters . . . twenty shillins a peece for all thees, one with another, & that he must be tyed to take twenty brace of them for else they will not bestow the making of a cops to take them . . . if they be not honest they may send more fawnes than any other deare.' Cousin Smuth, who is to divide them with Sir Ralph, says, 'Male Deere are my principle aymes.' Thomas Stafford writes about some 'of the wild beastes' he is getting Sir Ralph from Mr. Dodesworth, 'of Harrold Park, 4 or 5 miles beyond Owlney.'

June 2,
1657

Jan. 1,
1659.

After an infinite amount of negotiation Lord Monson is ready to accept an offer for his herd of deer at Grafton Park, Northamptonshire, Sir Ralph intends to buy them all, and then to divide them with Cousin Dick Winwood. The latter writes 'Because you desire to know what price I can be contented to give, I doe as in all cases of purchase, ground myselfe uppon the markett, which is twentie shillings for every Deere above a Fawne . . . the purchaser being att all the charges of taking and bringing away, & thirtie shillings a peece to have them delivered to me att Quanton. I shall expect the full indevor of the Keepers to holpe me in the taking of them, and to paye my money when I receave them.' But even this transaction could not be carried through without political complications. Sir Ralph heard 'that Homan of Paulers Perry might doe good service in taking the deere', but 'because he had sworn as a witness against my Lord, he knew not whether my Lord would like him.' Lord Monson's agent gave permission to 'bring in whom we pleased.' Upon this Sir Ralph felt himself authorised to employ this person of heretical opinions to catch the deer, but he did not escape 'my Lord's great wroath' for this 'indiscretion.'

The deer themselves prove to be as delicate and as easily

¹ The buck is called a fawn the first year, a *prickett* the second (see *Love's Labour's Lost*, iv. 2).

hurt as my Lord's feelings, and give occasion for many remonstrances and explanations on both sides. Two drown themselves in the park at Claydon, others sicken in the winter. 'It is an extraordinary trouble to me,' writes Holmes, the new steward, 'because my master delighted in them so much, I know not what to doe in the busnes but feed them, as well as may be.'

In the spring of 1660 'Cousin Winwood' is negotiating Feb. 11, 1660. for Sir Ralph the purchase of 'my Lord Whitlocke's deere,' which has also to be discreetly managed, for 'if it bee knowne at Henley that the deere are sould, my Lord being now under a little cloud, they will endeavour to share with his Lordshipp, therefore the sooner & the privater the busnesse bee down the better.' The keeper is to provide 'the Toyles' and to assist in catching them; 'Winwood lends the Buckstalles. As for Waggons,' writes Sir Ralph, 'I shall provide them; if there is but (as you guesse) about 20, one Waggon and one cart will easily bring them, for the Load is nothing, my own wagon is very long and large, and I remember you brought home 7 Bracco at a time in yours.' Doctor Denton mocked at the deer and their leanness, and at all the trouble they gave; he preferred horses any day. 'To upbraid your ill skill in pinguifyinge venison,' he writes, 'I eat yesterday a very fatt pasty of a Haunch, at Sir Orlando Bridgeman's.' But the deer were much admired in the country and it was Pen's opinion that her brother would 'sartanly mak a Princely Pallice of Claydon before he had don.' Sir Ralph was also buying swans to put into what he called 'my great navigable river.'

The plots are on foot again in 1658. Dr. Denton writes: 'We had a most lusty search on tuesday night, and much March 25, 1658. securinge. There is J. Russell and Major Harlow both in the Tower. S^r W^m Waller hath been examined but dismissed on parole. I am like Ralph that winked and thought because he saw nobody that nobody saw him. I hope they have more feares and jealousies then there is cause for.' 'Will H. V. never have more conscience than to sell Jades March 31, 1658. not worth 20*l*. for 30*l*. Tell Henry that I much rejoice at

the pleasant journey he had to Newmarket and at the Indian returne he made for his adventure thither. . . . I will give him 5*l.* for old Chamberlayne to carry me to Ely in Easter weeke and at my returne he shall have her againe for 4*l.* 15*s.* Desborow is married to her mother, who married St. John's son.'¹

April 19,
1658.

William Smith, who had narrowly escaped in 1657, was arrested now. He writes to Sir Ralph from his own house. 'Sir, on Wednesday here came souldiers with a warrant to search for and seize horses and arms and to apprehend me, I desired to see the warrant, which was under Sir George Fleetwood's hand. I was in Phisick but they would not lett me stay untill the next day, there were many in the warrant besides my selfe, but not you, but since I came home I hear that my Brother Alex. Denton should say they were att your house. Sir George Fleetwood came the next day to Allisbury, and told me he had a commission and instructions to imprison all that were of the late King's party. I am confined to Mr. Kilby's house, and Mr. Stafford is my bedfellow. Sir John Burlaiy, Mr. Tyrringham, and many others are confined to other places, and some are put in the Gaole. We have liberty of the gardens and orchards of the house, and may goe into the towne or fields with a souldier, which I doe not trouble. Sir George gave me leave to come home this day with a keeper with mee, but I am just now returning againe to my old Quarters. where I desire not to see you, and from whence when I shall be delivered or upon what termes I know not. God's will must bee donne, under which I am patient. If the souldiers have not been as yett att your house it is my opinion that you goe to London and stay there till this business is over.'

April 22,
1658.

'It is said that the High Court of Justice will suddenly sitt to try those who are thought to be guilty, and till then I believe the goates and sheepe must keepe Company together.' Sir Ralph upon receipt of this news sent to inquire after Sir Justinian Isham, who when Royalists were to be 'clapped up' was ever the first to suffer. 'Sir, I write now only to

April 27,
1658.

¹ See *post*, p. 167.

know both how and where you are, and how you have beene, and are like to bee, for in these wretched times a man must bee allowed to bee a little inquisitive after his Freinde. For my part, I am yet at home, and soe I hope to bee unlesse some new and stricter orders isheue out. That very day the gentry were taken heere, I went to bury Sir Roger Burgoyne's Lady in Bedfordshire, little dreaminge of such a businesse . . . I presume the heate is already over, for in these parts wee have had none taken of late, which makes me almost confident that this time shall bee escaped by Sir, yours etc., R. V.'

Sir Justinian replies. 'Sir, With divers other Gentlemen April 27,
1658 of these 4 Counties (under M^r [Major-General] Butler) I am at present under guard at Northampton, nothing hath bin yet declared to us, nor Major Butler yet seene amongst us; some particular men have laboured their freedom & hope to obtain it from above, but I cannot yet say who have it. It hath bin intimated to some that some declaration or acknowledgement is expected, but I heare no farther of it, & tis probable a great part may remaine here for some tyme, where most of us are visited with extreame colds and many taken with vomiting and purging. I am glad 'tis yet so wel with you, endeavor to keepe your selfe soe, none have bin brought hither since the first taking, and Sir L. Griffin hitherto excus'd by reason of his indisposition, your old Lord Brudenel heere, Lord Camden, Lord Cullen intra multos alios.'

Cromwell himself was full of trouble. Four months after the wedding celebrated with so much joy, his daughter, Frances, was left a widow, while still in her teens; and a few weeks after Lord Warwick had replied to the Protector's affectionate letter of condolence, he followed his grandson to the grave. The news reached Sir Ralph in one of Nancy Denton's childish scrawls. 'Sir I am forced to give you this April 22,
1658. trobill becas my father was sent for to my Lady Wharton's unexpectedly istardy . . . and my mother is sick a bed . . . truly I thinck that there was never so sickly tim this-mani years as it is now for truly all ouer house is sick, I think thar is not 5 that is well . . . all the newes I can wright you of

is that my Lord of Worik is Ded & died on munday morning' There is a hurried line from Dr. Denton at midnight, having just returned home: 'My Lady Wharton beinge dead, & soe is my Lord of Warwick, I can say no more, nor advise you what to doe, but to eat & sleepe in quiett. Stow is the fittest for Harry [Sir R. Temple being in favour with the Protector]. Its thought many heads will fly, sound discoveries having been made.'

May 9,
1658. Lady Hobart urged Sir Ralph to come up to town, where he was wanted to swear to his father's handwriting, but it was the eve of the day he always kept holy, the anniversary of Mary's death. 'It is impossible for me to be there soe soone,' he wrote, 'for tomorrow I never stirre wherever I happen to bec.'

June 10,
1658. The Protector was at the height of his glory that summer of 1658, a new parliament was to be summoned, and the Royalist plotters were at last thoroughly discouraged. Henry reports the fate of some of them: 'The good Dr, & Sir Harry, are both executed & this day the high court doth sitt again to trey Woodcock and another knight, whose name I have forgott.' Though the Royalists mourned Dr. Hewitt as an 'excellent preacher' and 'holy man,' most people felt that he and Sir Henry Slingsby richly deserved their fate, and even they would probably have been spared but for a second plot which came to light while their trial was actually proceeding; of those concerned in it Dr. Denton writes: '2 were executed yesterday & 1 reprieved when rope was about his neck.'

July 8,
1658. Henry also gives us the other side of the picture in the honour paid to Cromwell by foreign Powers: 'On tuesday last here arrived a parson of greate honor, whose name at present I have forgot [the Duc de Crequi] with a complement from the kinge of france to the Protector, & for the honor of our nation like to be nobley entertained by his Highness, for I dare say no imbassador whatsoever had soe greate an allowance as this courtier; 200*l.* a day for his table and other expenses, & lodg at Brookhouse.'

June 17,
1658. Henry keeps up his racehorses, and the Doctor is not

averse to a little quiet gambling. 'Harry and I have had this day a smart bout at Tables for colt Peterborough & my dun mare that is at Stow; & he gott but 2 games of the 21. Soe I have won y^e mare though happily in y^e sense I may loose by the match. . . . 100000 (I can allow you cyphers enow) thanks for Chesnut it is best to send her on Satterday [to Stowe] least Sir Rich. should be gone to the Assizes on Munday. . . . If my coach horses be out of tune, Kate will scold me into an Augure hole. Mal & Will are for Cheshire [Madcap has volunteered to go with them and to take Claydon on her way home], Kate is for Surrey & Wm. D. must be left all alone.'

Before the family party broke up Kate was to give a dinner, and there was a private joke between Sir Ralph and the Doctor about a savoury horse-pasty made at Claydon, the composition of which was to be kept a profound secret. 'Your precious clouted boxe, that brought the precious pyc,' has duly come, but Dalton doubts that 'our London dames will be soe queazy stomackt as not to touch y^e colt, but I have kept my councill hitherto' Two days later he reports: 'Cooke Laurence's owne privy kitchen had noe such dish as colt pyc, but nobody knowes what they have eaten as yett, noe nor Harry, nor dare not tell because Lady Longavile was at the feast. . . . I pray remember to get some body to back the colt as soone as may be, for I am like to have noe other for my owne saddle this summer.' He has journeys in prospect to 'Pittsberry, Audley Inn, & perhaps to Cambridge.' The horses are reported to be in poor condition, and the Doctor writes in conical despair, addressing the letter to his horses and their host: 'For his noble ffrends Don Diego, Hipporio, Radulpho Claydono.' 'Base, abominable, base newes indeed. I doubt my jades are growne as cunninge as theire Dame, I might say, as their Dr; loath very loath to goe from soe good quarters; that horses should goe 3 or 4 yeares togeather in coach & then jade it. It putts me beyond all patience, & soe confounds all my summer projects and progresses, that I am in a wood, & know not which way to turne my selfe More horses I

July 14,
1658.July 22,
1658.

like not to buy, haveing enough already, & to have none Kate will not be pleased.'

Wickedness does not go for ever unrewarded. Doll Smith and her mother planned a dinner at Ratcliffe at which there was much 'good company,' on purpose to give the Doctor 'a vengeance pasty' in return for 'colt pye.'

The new disease is rife again in the autumn of 1658. 'Lady Fiennes cannot recover,' Dr. Denton writes; 'I have given her 2 vomitts but it profitts little. I shall have a wonderfull losse in her, sed fiat voluntas Dei.' The precious colt and 'his keeper' are also ill at Claydon. The Doctor finds his *materia medica* within the limits of the old courtyard; the colt is ordered 'a groundsel purge,' and the man 'a stone crop vomitt' in repeated doses

Oct. 26,
1658.

If the physician prescribed for horses, there was 'a Horse-Smithe' at Edmonton ready to do as much for 'human mortals.' Mr. Wakefield recounts apologetically, and not very clearly, how he had made use of him: 'I have had my two youngest Children, 4 Maydes & 2 men, downe at a tyme of this new Disease, & yett through God's mercy are all recovered againe, though I impute it under God, to a meanes that some people would have scrupled to have made use of his Phisicke, Hee being by profession a Horse-Smithe, and keepes a shoppe in our Towne. Butt hee having practised upon many others about us, before we made use of him, the successe his Phisicke hath had in our Family, hath much encreased his fame, and really I thinke nott without desert; for he gives you as rationall an Accompte for what hee doth, as any Phisitian that I ever yett mette withall. What I write is nott to derogate from the honour due to many Phisitians of quallity [*pace* Dr. Denton], but in the country, such cannott spend any tyme with us; and the trouble of sending soe farre too & againe, besides often tymes the mistakes and miscarriages of thinges, forces us to doo that which if we were in London, we should hardly venture upon.'

At Claydon Mrs. Westerholt kept various potent mixtures going, to be administered as the Doctor wrote her word.

He refers admiringly to that 'purginge drinke as she made for the maids & the upholsterer,' and suggests that some burdock seeds or root might be added to it with advantage. The upholsterer, as he worked in the house, was admitted to share the family privileges. Did he abuse the house-keeper's kindness and help himself too greedily? We know not; we only hear that the upholsterer is like 'to make a dye of it,' but then, it is added, 'he was always a delicate man.'

In the great world outside, Cromwell was busier than ever; the government of the country depended upon his personal initiative, and his powerful mind was full of schemes for reform at home, and fresh triumphs for the Protestant cause abroad. Then Lady Claypole, his daughter, fell ill, and the Protector watched by her bed in an agony of sorrow. She died on the 6th of August; by the end of the month he was himself struck down. No alarm was felt at first, and Cromwell had an intense belief that he would recover. While the life-and-death struggle was going on in the sick-chamber, a terrific storm shook all the south of England, and the Royalists said that the Devil had come to fetch his own. On the anniversary of Drogheda, Sept 3, 1658, Dunbar and Worcester, praying for those that hated him, and longing to be yet 'farther serviceable to God and His people,' Oliver Cromwell passed away.

The quiet chit-chat of the family letters continues with no allusion to this event of supreme importance. Sir Ralph is expected at Croweshall, and Doll Locke watches for the coach: 'I am gron lean with walking to meet you, & froting as I came back . . . If I thought you cared for it, I could be angry.' Jack at school was spending that very September afternoon in painfully composing a Latin letter to his father, with no reference at all to the absorbing topic that was being discussed in the street outside. We only hear later on from Lady Hobart: 'My Lord protector's body was Bered last night at one o'clock very privittly, & tis thought that will be [no] show at tall: the army dou bluster a letill: god send us pes for I dred a combuston.'

About
Nov. 11,
1658.

The expectation that there would be 'no show' was

Nov. 11,
1658

emphatically falsified; there was a public funeral, magnificent and costly beyond precedent. The coffin lay for more than six weeks 'in open state' in Somerset House, and there was a wax effigy of Cromwell standing robed in crimson velvet (or, according to another account, in black), a sceptre in his hand, and a crown on his head. 'We are all a whist, no newes stirring,' writes Sir Roger Burgoyne, 'but that the old Protector is now gott upon his leggs againe in Sumersett House, but when he shall be translated to the rest of the Gods at Westminster I cannot tell. Pray, doe you come and see.'

'It is supposed that the great funeral will be about All Saints,' writes another contemporary. 'Henry the Seventh's Chapel is being cleansed.' But though Cromwell died on the 3rd of September the funeral was not till the 23rd of November, the oppressive ceremonial being rendered still more hollow by persistent reports of a secret burial. Some believed that this had taken place immediately after death, others that the corpse had been hastily buried a week before the funeral upon an alarm that the discontented soldiers meant to seize it as security for their arrears. Evelyn watched the 'superb' procession pass with the 'imperial banners, atchiements, heralds . . . guards, soldiers, & innumerable mourners . . . but,' he adds, 'it was the joyfulest funerall I ever saw, for there were none that cried but dogs, which the soldiers hooted away with a barbarous noise, drinking, & taking tobacco in the streets as they went.'

Though Evelyn looked on with hostile eyes, it was doubtless true that the procession evoked no reverent sympathy from the crowd. The profound lull that had followed the shock of the Protector's death was already giving way to intrigues and discontents. The French Ambassador, also an eye-witness, gives us a vivid picture of the close of this dismal pageant. The starting of the procession was long delayed by altercations in the Corps Diplomatique about precedence. The service was to have taken place by daylight, this delay not having been foreseen: but darkness fell

upon the short November afternoon. 'There was not a single candle in Westminster Abbey,' he writes, 'to give light to the company, and conduct the hearse into a sort of "Chapelle Ardente" which had been prepared; there were consequently neither prayers, nor sermon, nor funeral oration, and after the trumpets had sounded for a short time every one withdrew in no particular order.'

In the gloom of that winter afternoon the Westminster boys were marshalled to witness the ceremony. Less than ten years before they had voluntarily gathered themselves together to pray for King Charles as he was led to the scaffold, and all the Puritan governors, and the Presbyterian and Independent preachers in the Abbey, had been unable to extinguish the chivalrous loyalty of Westminster School. The boys were now stirred to speechless indignation by the various emblems of sovereignty they saw displayed in Cromwell's honour, and Robert Uvedale, whose family had been conspicuous for services rendered to the fallen dynasty, sprang forward through the legs of the guard, snatched from the bier the little satin banner known as the Majesty Scutcheon, darted back again, and before anyone could recover from the shock of the surprise was lost in the crowd of his school-fellows. It would have been highly inexpedient at such a moment to arrest and search the Westminster boys; so the bit of crumpled white satin remained in Robert Uvedale's pocket, to be proudly displayed in after years, and preserved as an heirloom in his family.

This curious little bit of wreckage that has drifted down to us from the storms of the seventeenth century found a safe harbour in the dignified seclusion of the Bursar's Room at Lincoln College, Oxford. Its late possessor, the Rev. Washbourne West, was the lineal descendant of Robert Uvedale, and the name of every member of the family in whose keeping the relic had been was known to him.¹ The boy himself, a great-nephew of Sir William Uvedale, Sir Edmund's old friend, went on to Trinity College, Cambridge,

¹ By permission of the late Rev. Washbourne West the Majesty Scutcheon was photographed for the first edition of this work

where in later years he was actually elected to a Fellowship in preference to Sir Isaac Newton. Behind the frame that enshrines the scutcheon is a long inscription, in Robert Uvedale's hand, beginning thus: 'Hoc Insigne raptum est a feretio tyranni Olivarii Cromwelli, cum effigies ejus cerea, regali cultu ornata, in ædibus Sancti Petri apud Westmonasteriensis magnifice se ostentabat' &c.

The 'quiet bones' of the poorest men and women who fell victims to the epidemic at Claydon were at least permitted 'among familiar names to rest, and in the places of their youth'; but to the great man who had played so large a part in England's history this common privilege of humanity was denied. The body laid in the Abbey vaults with such exaggerated pomp of ceremonial was ere long to be dug up again by the jackals of the Restoration, in order that every insult might be heaped upon it that petty malignity could devise.



THE MAJESTY SCUTCHEON.

CHAPTER XLI.

OF WOMEN'S MATTERS IN DISTRACTED TIMES.

1656-1659.

SIR RALPH'S sisters and lady friends were all, with one exception, Royalists; Constitutional Freedom was a cause for men to defend, Charles Stuart was a person for women to love and pity. The exception was of course Eleanor, Countess of Warwick; she had grasped from the first the importance of the issues, and had followed with enthusiasm every phase of the struggle. She was the recognised chaperon of the young Commonwealth whom other great ladies snubbed as a low-born and presuming creature. During the Protectorate she figured as almost our only Peeress, as well as being latterly stepmother-in-law to the Protector's daughter. But when, within a few months, Lord Warwick died, and Cromwell's family were so completely swept into oblivion as never again to influence English history, the widowed Countess was carried along by the tide, and Sir Ralph was soon called upon to arrange the settlements for her fourth marriage, with the Earl of Manchester, who was also wedding for the fourth time. Edward Montagu, Earl of Manchester, had always been too lukewarm a partisan to satisfy Cromwell, and was soon to welcome the incoming dynasty. Aunt Isham regrets that the Countess's mature charms and triple jointure were not bestowed on Sir Ralph, and writes, with an allusion to Mrs. Aris's wedding: 'I could wish that you was married to the widdoe Warwick, ether a bed or up, so you had her anyhow.'

Sir Ralph and Mr. John Cary of Ditchley 'are careful to secure that Revenues, Rents, plate, jewels, goods & chattels

belonging to the said Countesse,' shall 'continue to be in her sole & personal disposal.' Splendid dress and furniture were coming once more into fashion in the latter years of Oliver's rule. Lady Warwick has 'a faire knot of gold, enamelled with Tulipps set with Diamonds'; 'a greate round jewell of gold, set round with Rowes of diamond, & one great diamond in the middle'; 'Ropes of Pearle,' a fan-handle of emeralds and diamonds, another fan with rubies, 'a sweet bag embroidered with pearles,' and 'sixteen dozen of buttons enamelled with black with a diamond in every button'—probably the ones shown in her portrait at Ditchley.

One set of her tapestry-hangings represents the four seasons, another in eight pieces 'a designe of flower-potts, and there is 'a fine suite of landscape hangings with pillars, of 155 $\frac{3}{4}$ Flemish ells,' in five pieces. For the withdrawing-rooms are two complete 'suites,' one of 'blue wrought velvet, fringed with blue', another in 'Crimson figured satten, with silk fringe & gilt nailes, 4 Crimson wrought window Curtaines lined with Crimson China Satten, & 1 greate Crimson velvet Cabinett'; each suite has 'chaires, stooles & carpet to match.' The bedrooms are furnished with equal splendour. There is a 'Crimson figured satten Bed, trimmed with Im-broidered buttons and loopes, with Carpet, Chaires & stooles suteable'; '2 little China Carpets with coloured silkes & gold'; 'one scarlet cloth bed lined with Satten, a Counter-pane of Satten trimmed with gold & silver ffringe & a rich gold & silver ffringe about the vallins'; another room is upholstered in 'Carnation quilted satin,' and a fourth in 'greene cloth, with Isabella & greene silk lace fringes, lined with Isabella taffety, and sheetes edged with puple.' Her widow's bed is of fine black embroidery, with 'a shoete wrought with black silke shaddowed,' with black chairs, stools, and carpet to match. We also hear of gilt leather, and of carpets from Turkey and Persia.

When we pass to any family less sumptuously lodged than that of the great Presbyterian Earl, the women are as little able to vie with Lady Warwick in upholstery as in political intelligence and influence. And rare indeed was

the home in which the unsettled times had not brought a burden of painful retrenchment on its mistress. Law suits abounded, and quarrels engendered by the Civil War blazed up by the fireside as vehemently as those of Presbyterians, army officers, and Levellers in the world without.

John and Penelope Denton were still wrangling with his mother and his many creditors, and when he was not in Oxford gaol 'Pen's bruit of a husband,' as Doctor called him, was apt 'to lay her at his feet', 'It is not long since that upon a slit occasion, he did cık me about the house.' They came to Claydon, but could never persuade Sir Ralph to visit them in return, though Pen drank water to keep her ale for him, and took his constant denials very ill.

Peg Elmes's 'disordered spleene,' and the imperious temper that distinguished her and her husband alike, led them in 1657 to discuss again the terms of a separation. Sir Thomas thinks that 'to part in Love . . . may increase it . . . down in a way that nobody may know, certainly *guess* they will, but *know* they need not.' Peg's desire to detail her symptoms to every new doctor she heard of was a 'chargeable diversion,' and her husband's estimate of a proper allowance was most niggardly. Peg wished to live with Cary, and her sister was ready to welcome her heartily, 'if we can agree upon termes of diet & other conveniences which shee must have . . . Bot from an eldar brother's tabill & the command of a hous, & a coach & 4 horsis to an inconsiderabill younger brother, & a father of many children & a littell hous, it will be a great fall.' Margaret had fed so long on the 'stalled ox and hatred therewith' that she silenced Cary's scruples, but she proved a troublesome addition to the 'dinner of herbs' at Preshaw. To prepare for the trials of a small establishment she desires her brother to order 'a plain sillvor woch . . . as good a goeing one as I could, for I have it merely to know how the time goes away, & att Preshaw I am sertain, the never have ather clock or woch.' She is to pay 5s. a cwt. for the transport of her goods from London, and is sending them off, but being very unwell she lingers in the neighbourhood of physicians.

Sir Ralph fears her 'too greate love to London' may be misconstrued 'by Norton . . . and if you Falter with your friendes at Preshaw, peihappes theire mindes may alter too, and then I know not where you will finde soe fit, soe good and soe honorable a retiring place. By this time I know you are more then a little angry.'

Aug 1658. Peg's displeasure fills two folio sheets: 'I may justly make yous of the owlde fraise & say you tooke me up be foare I was downe . . . sertenly brother you cannot thincke as I stay heare now out of love to the plaise, when theare is hardly a cretur in it that I know, but if theare wale, I hope I have never caryed myselfe soe . . . but that I may stay in any plaise . . . as I take the being parted from my husband as no wayes to my honer soe I take it for noe sich great dishonor as to be tied to live in obscurity all my dayes' Sir Ralph calls her 'as captious a sister as she has been a wife' . . . 'steere what corse you please, you have now made it very indifferent to your Brother Verney.' Peg retorts, but at this point Cary and the Doctor insist that there shall be peace. 'Your D^r & you must not thinke to tell every body of theire faults and goe untold yourselves; you, if theire father had been alive, durst not use your sisters soe slightly & pick quarrels . . . for feare they should be a burden to you. . . . I know noe reason why we should be out of the common lot of all men. Christe himselfe had his share hereun, he was a Samaritan & had a Divell, & why should we speed better than our Master?'

Sept 23,
1658.

Sir Ralph once more took the Doctor's reproof in good part, and soon husied himself again in Margaret's interest. Before the fretful invalid settles at Preshaw, we may glance back at the family story of the Stewkeleys during the two preceding years.

There had been a sad outbreak of small-pox there in 1656; Cary had sent a note to a neighbour's house not knowing they had it, and the coachman brought back the infection. All the children and step-children sickened 'of this disease, as loathsome as dangerous'—'we ware all one among another, bot what fled.' The little ones should

have been sent out of the house, but their maid was away on a holiday, and 'infants are not easily disposed on.' Cary 'never went to bed in seven nights together besides many halfe nights'; she kept up while the children were in danger and then broke down utterly, whether 'from long working,' as the Doctor said, or from 'a sorfet of eating pigg,' as she herself surmised, Mr. Stewkeley could not decide. He had in vain preached prudence, and could only hope 'that the seasonable advertisement of a brother, may make deeper Impressions then of a Husband in doing—of what many of us need noe remembrancer—to love ourselves. . . . As she lives in her children more then in herself, so I wish the result of her maternall care would center in the preservation of herself.' Peg Gardiner narrowly escaped total blindness and was 'much worne out,' she 'is to keep on a mask & searcloths this winter.' Ursula, who refused to do the same, is deeply pitted.

Cary hopes to be free from infection by Christmas—'set the noisary aside, ther is no danger, I have cured all plasis so well.' But prudence was thrown to the winds on the happy occasion of the wedding of a stepdaughter in November. 'Joy is coming into our house againe, for this day Page & Jane is marryed, & I wish more may follow . . . I am going to gine in Merth with the rest of our Company.' Ursula, with her deeply scarred face, and Peg with her mask and searcloth, were not very eligibile bridesmaids. Cary's wish that 'more may follow' is explained by Ursula's conduct, who questioned her stepmother's authority on many points besides the care of her health and complexion. Another daughter, Penelope, Cary's third child by John Stewkeley, was born the next summer.

Nov. 27,
1656.

In the spring of 1658 Cary is preparing once more for the wedding of a stepdaughter, Anne, three years older than Ursula, and much more amiable. The snow is still deep in Hampshire and has lain long. 'The flock hath eat nothing but straw this 6 weekes, nethar can ther sarvant help it for hay he had none, and if hee byes it hee must pay 4 pound a tonn and tis feared it will destroy the

June 7,
1657.

Feb. 17,
1658.

flock, bot look on the least harme it can doe them and ther woll must fall short, and bee an ill case to be sold off at mickellmas—nethar can they plow for barley.’ She is nevertheless full of her hospitable preparations: ‘For now I can acquaint you that nancy is to be married to one Mr. Grove a wellshe gentelman of near 3 hondred a yeare in present possession, he is young and hancome and, I think, very desarving every way, her banns are once asked, bot shee is not to be married till thursday senet aftar yesterday, and your company is so earnestly desiared that wee resolve to give you this timely notis. You will meat heare S^r John Cotton and his lady with some relations of his, bot tis only near kindred so wee account it privat. Pray let not the smallnesse of our house disharten you, for I shall only troble you in haveing your sonn loay with you, which I hope you will bare with, in a great bed.’ Sir Ralph hopes to come. ‘But why do you Tantalize the poore young creature & make her keepe soe strict a Lent. I love not Fish & were she of my diet & humour (or perhaps of yours) certainly she might well account it a very greate severity.’ Cary’s household complications increase; she has extended her hospitality to Betty, though ‘trobled with the speck-tikill of a discontented Sister’; Mr. Stewkeley’s elder brother pays them long visits and must be humoured, lest he leave his money elsewhere; Daughter Grove returns later in a state when ‘she is not to be crossed in anything’—and Peg Elmes is expected.

Feb 10,
1658.

Betty is wild to go off to London—‘Hid Parck and the cherries ther is veri plesant to me.’ Cary is always pleading for her with Sir Ralph—‘I cannot bot pety her when I consider the world hath frouned uppon her, in that she cannot regain her own, though tis A calamity thousands have soffared with her . . . her misfortune was not to be brod under parents, so she was spoyled in her education by sarvants . . . we must bare with her the more.’ ‘Truly Sister,’ Sir Ralph replies, ‘if you yourselfe were of such a humour, that you should sit wishing for death & sigh & sobb & pout yourselfe into a sicknesse, could you then

with any confidence expect a more then common comiseration? . . . I must confesse your proportion of good nature doth very farre exceed my owne, for had I a sister in my house (nay a Wife) that would have beene noe better pleased, my stock of kindnesse & patience would have been soe wholly spent, that shee could not have been neare soe long suffered to inhabit there with me'

When Peg was ill at Preshaw, 'Sis Betty,' to do her justice, 'did as much as any sarvant for her.' Peg had been 'even to death's dore, to coldness & stiffness these 20 daies'; Oct. 22,
1658. her husband was 'in great hopes of her death,' and Aunt Isham considered that 'she would be Little Lamented, the more is hir misery.' But Death himself was in no hurry to possess Peg Elmes, and she managed to get back to town leaving her kind hosts much dissatisfied with the 20^l she had left to defray the heavy expenses of her illness. 'Truly Jan 4,
1659. I thought Pegg would a delt hansomber with me,' Cary wites, 'bot I will try my wits to make the best of it to my husband . . . as we came together in love so wee will part; bot I dare boldly say shee will not be so obsarved in any family againe in hast nor so waighted on.' 'Peg thinks she can live cheaper in London then hear . . . bot I have cast Jan. 11,
1659. it up—80^l. a year it will cost her, besids wine & breckfasting & washing & candle & hear; & for the coach 5^l. a yeare, & hear she had two sarvants & thar will have bot one, & for fuell you may ges the diferanc. . . . The D^r heare thinks, bot shee is angry to heare him . . . if shee taks not much physick shee will be the better . . . all this is tresone.' 'I am shur a door did not shot hard in my hous bot it disordered her, though now it semes the noys of musick & so much company can be indured; & beare she did punctually take something every 2 howars or elc shee was faint. If Jornes can make one gaine so much stringth . . . I think it ware a good way for me to torn travelar: bot I thang God for the remove for I feind much ease to my mind & to my body sine she went away.' 'Tis well Pegg Feb. 14,
1659. could stay so long out of her chamber,' Cary writes again, 'hear was not a window cortains undrane & shee sat in

April 10,
1659.

a clos wickhar char, with a rogg rapt all about her, & a choshen under her feet besids.' 'Doctors' Fines will be her constant chamber followars. Truly D^r Are & D^r Care is my chef physistions, though I am fain to have a more chargabill D^r many times, bot ther is one D^r Verney, would due as great a cuare on mee as the othar three.'

Of Sir Ralph's remaining sister, Mary Lloyd, there are few memorials during these years, except her piteous begging letters—'I have not a gownc that will hange on my Bake, it is so olde that as I mende it in one place, it teares out in a nother, so that I am clothed with rages . . . & all mostnacked' Robert Lloyd seems to have settled in Wales 'for there all things are cheaper.' Their son Humphrey was born in June 1657; in 1659 Dr. Denton and Mr. Gape are 'mediating with Sir Ralph,' to grant his sister a cow; and Mary writes—'Pray dericthe your letters for to be lefte att Mrs. Magdalen Lloyd's shoope in Wrixham for mee.'

Aug 16,
1659.

Sir Ralph had set his heart upon a family gathering in the autumn of 1659. It was six years since Lady Gardiner had been at Claydon; it was difficult for her to travel either with or without her large party. John Stewkeley returns thanks, from 'Pickadilly,' for the invitation. 'The late noysis of risings puts mee in a fear,' Cary writes later, 'that I have no fortune to see Claydon, the plas I do much long to be at; for if distorbancees incres I would not be so uncevell to trobell your house, knowing strangers are unseasonabill at souch times.'

Aug. 10,
1659.

Sir Ralph urges Aunt Sherard to join them. 'Tis but a stepp to Claydon & my Coach shall attend your daughters and my Cozen Fust, when & where you please to command it, & for theire sakes I shall double my endcavour to save my Horses from the soldiers who at this hower doe swarme at Brickill, Stratford, Alisbury, & in some little villages neare me, & I heare are unruly enough in all places, but these only pass towards Cheshire, and make no stay in these parts, therefore you need not feare them. . . . On Mounday there was about a Thousand Foot marched through my grounds about halfe a mile off, & on Tuesday

some 5 hundred horse & Dragoons with there Ordnance & 9 wagons of Ammunition & I was soe very a clowne as not to invite them to my house · but to bee more serious, God be thanked I did not suffer by them. I am informed that greater numbers of horse & foot then wee have yet scene are to passe very suddenly, all immaginable haste is made to reduce Cheshcire, soe that I hope they will finde no leasure to bee injurious to me.'

Mun and Jack were at home, and so complete was the gathering that there is not a single family letter written to Sir Ralph during that month of September. It certainly required some courage on his part to receive his four sisters; they usually discovered in their old home some piece of furniture or linen which they claimed as a right under their mother's will, or begged as a favour. This time Pen and Peg took a fancy to the same chair, and called each other hard names about it; Pen considered that Peg's self-will 'hath grone up with her from her cradell; all together she cannot make her great brags, her one will, hether two, hath made her unfortunate. . . . I must follow Sister Gardiner's good humer and forget her ill humer to us both.'

Cary writes to her brother, on the way home, 'At the bare' at Reading: 'In souch paper as the Inne affords me, I cannot but let you know wee are safely arrived at Reding before sunset, and your horsis have performed ther jorney very well. I acknowledg the gretest of thanks is due to you though I cannot expres it to you. I know by this time you have the hapy chang of your quiet which you could not have in souch a rout. My sarves to all your good company and till them I would have them pounce the pety-coat still and chang Flary to frighten Ante Isham with his ugly faces ele I shall take it ill.'

Oct. 21,
1659.

Penelope and her husband stayed two months at Claydon, and John Stewkeley thus describes their return journey: 'The Squier had a sad martch to London: hee had a great contest with Pen for a place in the coach, but Seartlett was preferd before him: hee rode as near the coach as if his horse had been tied to it, and was wett to the skin before hee

Nov. 3,
1659

came half way' 'Soe he had noe good luck,' adds Peg Elmes, 'after all his long feasting.'

We can see Sir Ralph's carriages and the party of riders clattering into the market-place at Aylesbury, all splashed and dripping after fourteen miles of heavy November roads; we hear the hard words and hard blows exchanged as the passengers struggle for places in the public coach; while the Claydon servants, the post-boys, and ostlers are grinning to see Squire Denton foiled in his efforts to push past his wife in order to secure an inside seat for himself. No wonder that his ill-humour lasted beyond the journey; 'his black eye,' writes Brother Stewkeley, 'hath made him very nice of admitting any to see him since hee came upp; hee is scarce in charity yet with his playfellows, but time will doe it.'

Anne Hobart, staying with Daughter Smith at Ratcliffe, and looking back upon Claydon hospitalities, writes to Sir Ralph: 'I pety you from my hart, that you have so much compeny, but when I conseder how near and dear they ar all to you—it tis a recreaton, espeshally when it coms but sildom.'

Betty Verney returned with the Stewkeleys to Preshaw, where she relapsed into sad fits of grumbling; but it is impossible not to sympathise with the orphan girl, who had missed all the petting and spoiling that were her due as the youngest of a large family, or to wonder that she envied Ursula Stewkeley and Nancy Denton, whose caprice and wilfulness were viewed at home with an indulgence that Betty had never known. 'She holds her peace,' we are told, after a good scolding from Cary, 'only repeats often, how happy Ury is to have a father and uncill which dus all they can to help her to live in pleshur.'

CHAPTER XLII.

'TURNING WHEELS OF VICISSITUDE.'

1658-1660.

OLIVER CROMWELL is dead and gone, but his Highness Richard, the Lord Protector, rules in his stead. There is a pause of silence and expectation. For a moment it seems as if the good ship of State would hold steadily on her course, even though the strong hand has relaxed its grip of the helm and left her amidst gathering clouds to a feeble and inexperienced pilot. Dryden in his heroic stanzas to Oliver's memory could write with general acceptance —

No civil broils have since his death arose,
But faction now by habit does obey;
And wars have that respect for his repose
As winds for halcyons when they breed at sea.

But there are mutterings of the coming storm when Dr. Denton reports, in October 1658: 'The souldiers are not so quiett as I could wish, they would fayne a generall distinct from the Protector.'

In marked contrast to preceding years, the Verney letters are full of references to the state of the country during Richard Cromwell's protectorate, and the confusion that followed it; public anxieties once more taking precedence of private interests. Sir Ralph was eagerly watching every shift of the wind, but he was not too busy to write a charming letter to the ladies at Croweshall when Doll was planning a visit to town. 'Deare Cozen, I would not interrupt your London pleasures at your very first coming . . . but Cozen

Nov. 15,
1658.

is it possible you should take a journey of 4 score miles in

this season, through such wayes & Waters, to visit London, & then stay but 8 or 10 dayes there? it cannot bee, for though almost all the World is changed yet you are still the same D: L: that dwelt at Claydon, & cañot bee guilty of such a crime soe highly prejudittiall to all your Friendes, kindred, & acquaintance, & soe absolutly contrary to your owne knowne Humour, & affections too; this were to forget your owne People, & your Fathers house indeed, if you lie under such a vow, tis better broke then kept I must confesse when my Lady Gaudy is at Croweshall, the seate is good & pleasant, & that old House (in my conceit) excells the Louvre, & Escuiall; were her Ladishipp here, this House would doe soe too: her presence is able to consecrate all places where she comes; but I presume she is still at Hewzon, with her beloved sonne & daughter, delighting herselfe in her new acquired Title of a Grandmother.'

Jan 1659

Mr. Butterfield, catching something of the general excitement, is taking voters to the election at Buckingham. 'I intend with God's leave if the wether be such as I may safely venture abroad, to see the Knights chosen on Wednesday, & to take such as I can get to goe along with mee; most on this side will be for those two gent. but here is talke as though the Anabaptist party were like to carry it on the other side.' Sir Richard Temple was elected for Buckingham with Francis Ingoldsby, Esquire. Sir Roger Burgoyne did not stand, and his seat for Warwick was filled by Fulke Lucy of Charlecote. Odd little bits of gossip have survived. 'Sir H. Wroath in a drunken fit (as I doubt),' writes the Doctor, 'affronted Packer [M.P. for Wallingford] on the high way soe highly that he complained to the house of it, he is sent for as a delinquent.'

Feb. 21,
1659.

Cromwell, anticipating the reforms of our own day, had made some progress with a redistribution of seats in proportion to the changes of population. A reaction followed his death, and Dr. Denton rejoices that old Malton, where the influence of the Eures lay, 'after much labour and sweat . . . hath a Joynt interest of electing Burgesses for Parlt with new Malton, & soe the report is to be made to the house.'

March 2,
1659.

'Dick's Parliament,' as it was called, met on January 27, 1659. Dr. Denton writes: 'I can tell you noe newes but that I graced the Parl^t House by makinge a simple speech in it.' In answer to Sir Ralph's expressions of surprise and curiosity he writes again: 'Soft Sir soft. It is not for Feb 17, 1659. Plebeians to know why we made our learned speech in the House. But because you tell me of such good newes of your favorite, I will tell you. At the Com^{tee} of Prividledges sittinge in the House, Mr. Howard having noe Councill there & being at a losse, I was fayne under the pretence of my neeces Interest to say some pretty simple things which was enough for Mons^r le Medecin to quack withall. However it was as wise as my L^d Barkstead, who uppon a suñons from the com^{tee} of Greeviances for a false imprisonment came to the barre (they sittinge in the House) the bar beinge down, with his hatt off, & there was treated by the name of Mr Barkstead with out welt or guard, & made soe pittifull a defence that they have voted the prisoner (whose name I know not) free, the imprisonment illegal, & will take further time to consider of reparacōns & you are welcome (sent. Feb 21, 1659. Coll: Tyrrell was in the chair.'

This incident caused much uneasiness to the Protector's party; while Oliver lived his arbitrary acts were submitted to as necessary to the public safety. John Portman, formerly Blake's secretary, was imprisoned, on Cromwell's own warrant, as a Fifth Monarchy man about to take up arms. Barkstead, the Lieutenant of the Tower, a brave soldier who dreaded nothing except having to make a speech, had deferred as long as he dared appearing at the bar of the House.¹ The warrant was pronounced to be illegal, and the prisoner ordered to be discharged, and thus a blow was struck at the existing government by the Republicans, under pretence of redressing a former wrong.

On the 22nd of April Richard Cromwell, yielding to the dictation of the Council of Officers at Wallingford House, dissolved the Parliament that had met in January. But the difficulty of raising money forced the soldiers to have recourse

¹ Guizot, *Richard Cromwell*, i. p. 89.

to another, and on the 7th of May, to avoid fresh elections, the fragments of the Long Parliament were pieced together and set up again at Westminster, under their old Speaker, Lenthall. In the meantime all authority was passing out of Richard Cromwell's hands. The Rump announced that they were to 'endeavour the settlement' of the Commonwealth 'without a Single Person or House of Peers'; but for eighteen days he lingered on at Whitehall. On the 25th of May, however, his Highness the Lord Protector sent in his abdication, which the House instantly accepted without demur, and 'Mr. Richard,' shorn of all his titles, was requested to retire from Whitehall and 'to dispose of himself as his private occasions shall require.' So easy is it to fall!

Honest, kind-hearted, and conscientious, but hopelessly discredited as a ruler, this 'mute, inglorious' 'Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood,' retired into complete obscurity, endowed with 'a comfortable and honourable subsistence' and with the people's nickname of 'Tumble-down Dick.'

And now the hurly-burly began in earnest. The 'Single Person' had disappeared, and the Rump and the officers were left to fight out the old question of the independence from civil control claimed by the army: 'The Saints, shouting for "the good Old Cause," wanted a pure democracy, while the Royalists were preparing in several counties to proclaim King Charles.'

'Lord Harry is sneaking,' writes the Doctor in June, with scant respect for the best of Cromwell's sons, 'and hoping they will give him an Hon^{ble} livelihood, & its hoped not.' The bills for Oliver's State funeral were still unpaid, the country could hardly throw them upon 'Mr. Richard' now, however unpopular this outlay had become, and matters were no further advanced by the order of the Council of State for 'the demolition of the chapel in which the late Protector's effigy was exposed.'¹ The House of

¹ M. de Bordeaux to M. de Brienne, June 10th, 1659 (Guizot, *Richard Cromwell*).

Commons had to be appealed to, and Lady Hobart writes in July of an Act 'to mack all pay for the morning my Lord protector gave.' There are 'rumours of many troubles but noe certainty of any.'

Penelope is chiefly anxious about Henry's safety. Dr. Denton had told her that 'there is a Banning coming out against such Rabble Rout as he is.' 'I pray god mak me so happy as that his Act against delinquents cannot touch my Brother' The Doctor writes to Sir Ralph: 'I hope this will find you safe and sound returned maugre all rumors, feares & jealousies, which continue high here, still, & want for noe multiplicacōn caused by addition of Cyphers only, & not one reall significant truth that I know of. Offensive . . . Persons, Armes, & horses are secured in divers counties.'

July 19,
1659.

July 28,
1659.

Public anxiety is growing, a terror of a new civil war seizes upon quiet people, but the troops of the Parliament are successful. Massey, who is leading the Royalists in Worcestershire, is defeated and taken prisoner. Dr. Denton relates how he subsequently made his escape while riding in front of the trooper who guarded him. 'The horse stumblinge threw them both, by which meanes he escaped into the wood, & is not yet found that I heare of.' There is a warrant in August requiring Sir Ralph to send a horse to the George at Aylesbury, or 10*l*. 'to excuse horse & armes.'

Aug. 4,
1659.

The Doctor next writes to Sir Ralph after the Parliament had despatched Lambert to crush the insurrection in Cheshire under Sir George Booth, and the greatest anxiety was felt in London. 'I hope you will be soe wise as to put the horses in the woods. I pray let your Favoritt's shooes be pulled off that she may goe for a colt. We all wished ourselves with you last night; this place was never so neare aflame, bussell, confusion which you will, as last night by the Judgm^t of all, & what will be the Issue a few more houres I ghesse will declare. We have all a mind to be out of the towne, but yett hopes feares, & jealousies doe soe distract us, as that we can resolve of nothing. I wish my papers & other things were with you, for we doe not thinke

Aug. 10,
1659.

ourselves at all secure here . . . The face of things may alter in a mom^t, the battle not beinge alwaies to the strong nor the race to the swift etc; but the open face of things at this present appeares thus, viz. noe considerable force, if any at all, up anywhere but with S^r G. Booth, who with others are now proclaimed traitors, & agst whom there is gone a strong force. Desborough gone into the West to keepe all quiett there, with power to arm all 5th monarchy men & the like; new militias raisinge in every county: The only thinge that lookes like countenancinge Sir George, is the intended peticōn of the city for a free parl^t as they say. This finds soe great opposicōns that for my part I thinke it can come to nothinge. I doe not heare of any one Cavalier in all this affaie, but that it is wholly on the presbytery, & those that fought & engaged for what they call the good old cause; the result out of the premisses is this, that if warrs continue the debt must encrease; taxes, free quarter, militia horses, besides the casualty of plunder must & will dock the renew, & interest as bad as all those will eat like militia horses whilst you sleepe.'

Sir Ralph is full of gloomy forebodings; by reason of these new troubles he is obliged to suspend payment of interest to some of his creditors. 'I never yet fayled paying within the time, but if warres come God knows what we shall all suffer.'

Aug 20,
1659.

When the first rumours of Lambert's victory reach London Dr. Denton writes: 'As for Cheshire busines you must have a lusty faith & beleve Lyes, contradictions, nay impossibilities, as that the castle is surrendered quietly, & yett taken by storme & every man put to the sword; that Charles Stuart is kept prisoner by france & Spaine, & yett landed here; that Mountague [Admiral of the Fleet] kist his hand to daies since, & yett he & his navy will live & dy with the parl^t; that Booth & Lambert are in treaty, & yett Lambert refuses to treat at all, & other stuff then this I can send you, & this I take it is enough to torture your beleife.'

Doll writes that Lady Gawdy's house has been searched.

'which we took unkindly for we thought we had behaved ourselves so as not to be suspected. Sene the presbeterians fight against the parliment I will think all things possible for I beleved them inseperable.'

The question in everybody's mind was what part General Monk would take, and when it was known that he was likely to support the Rump, Lambert and the officers at Wallingford House forcibly dissolved Parliament, for the second time, and constituted themselves the sole authority.

Oct. 13,
1659.

Dr. Denton writes to his nephew, having received, as he says, 'a Loyne of Cause Raph. We hope to eat it merrily for your sake. Maugre all alarms & tumults: We are in the posture you left us: the City doth nothinge effective. Fleetwood hath gott the Tower by a trick, & Southampton hath taken itselſe, for whilst the garrison went out to trayne they shutte the gates & soe keepe them out.'

Dec. 14,
1659.

The next day a new Constitution was proclaimed by the Council of Officers, and Parliament was to meet in February. Sir Roger writes 'The coñon counceill satt yeisterday from 10 in the morning till 6 at night, and the result of all was not very acceptable to the generallty of the Citty; they have not yet according to the petitions settled a militia of their own. What a few daies more may produce God only knowes: God fitt us for the worst of times.' 'Several horses have been taken & when to be restored I am to learn. Lambert is reported to be at Newcastle and his men reduced to some straits, being not supplied according to expectation with shooes & stockins, for if report be true a friggott that was bound for Newcastle with that kind of ware & arms, most unhappily mistook the port & sett in to Leith in Scotland, so that Monk's army have mett with them. Monk they say is at Barwick, a good distance from the other, yet its said that Major Creed had an encounter with a party of Monk's & had not the better of it. Sir H. Vane is return'd and Salloway; severall of Rump, with Lawson [Admiral of the Fleet in the Thames] who for the present declares for a Parl^t; I suppose the Rump, though some

Dec. 15,
1659.

Dec. 20,
1659.

doubt it Sir Arthur Haslrig & Morley are still at Portsmouth.'

Dec. 21,
1659.

Sir Roger writes twice the next day, 'by carrier as well as by Coach,' and tells Sir Ralph of the perplexity and indecision in the City 'A Common Councill was chose this day & such a one as hath not these many yeares been known for Malignancy.' Sir Nathaniel Hobart's income in the Court of Chancery had fallen considerably owing to 'the troubles of the times', he had been ill of a pleurisy in the spring, to the great alarm of his family. 'I infinitely long to heare of honest Natticock,' wrote Sir Ralph to Doll, '& to bee assured of his recovery, for a better friend & a better Man is not knoune to me.' Thanks to the Doctor's care he recovered, and Mun wrote to Lady Hobart: 'It is my earnest prayer that Destinye (though she pauzed a while) will never grow wearye of spinning the thred of his well deserved life.' Doll Lecke writes to Sir Ralph 'I am concerned for my pore brother & sister, for ther condision is ill by reson of these alterasions in stat affairs.' She longs for a visit from him. 'Really I wish it wear all the way carpets to tempt you'

Nov. 30,
1659.

Dec. 25,
1659.

Mr. Butterfield is keeping a melancholy Christmas at Claydon. 'We expect here you should have no great quiet at London, for the souldiers that passed up toward London this last weeke talkt openly of Plundering the city.' John Stewkeley, writing on 'St. Stephen's Day,' is expecting Christmas company every minute; the late tumults in the City have made his brother very solicitous about his London property. Meanwhile, the old Rump showed fresh signs of life. On Monday the 26th the Members reassembled at Whitehall, marched with Speaker and Mace to Westminster Hall, made a House and began upon business.¹ Lambert's army has melted away in the northern snows without waiting for the enemy. 'No Government in the Nation,' wrote Evelyn,

¹ Lines said to be written on the door of the House of Commons:

'Till it be understood

What's under Monk's hood,

The citizens pull in their horns;

Till ten days be out

Old Will has the gout,

And the Parliament sits upon thorns.'

Letter to Lady Russell by 'E. A.' January 20, 1660.

'but the soldiers, & they not agreed God Almighty have mercy on us, and settle us.' The Restoration was in the air and in all men's minds as a hope or a fear, but as yet in no man's mouth. It is impossible to read these letters of eye-witnesses, giving the changes of opinion day by day, without realising how many various causes were driving men to this solution of England's difficulties.

The new year 1660, Evelyn's 'Annus Mirabilis,' had begun. John Stewkeley writes from Hampshire that 'the Rump is grown very big of late' 'If any newes of consequence fall in your way that is not printed, it will bee very acceptable here, for Mercurius doth abuse us too often. What the Sword-bearer brought of Monke's coming up, may bee falsly rendered by him, therefore we desire you would undeceive us.' Peg Elmes hears how Monk is 'courted as he comes along on his march to town.' Sir Roger writes on the 26th 'for newes I am much to seek for it . . . the Parlt hath sett forth a declaration . . . which is very fair and plausible, it affects the Ministry, the Law, Universities, the people's liberties, & many other good things. Monk is, I suppose, what he was, & what that is, a far wiser man then myself cannot tell, I heare he lay at M^r Pierpoints on Thursday last . . . great confidence is expressed on both sides, if he satisfies both, he will be more lucky then ordinary.'

Sir Roger writes again, while Monk was pausing at St. Albans 'on Fryday Mouck is expected heere, & most men are tired out with the various prognostications that are made as to his future proceedings. Norfolk & Suffolk have sent up their declarations touchinge another kinde of Parlt but I heare not of any more clapt up. Was Sir Robert P^{ye} the smile that came from Moncks face, upon that occasion as you mention? I hope so or rather wish that it was the result not of his disdain, but pleasant reception of that proposition made by the Lady.'

Neither Sir Roger nor Sir Ralph could so far forget their old fight against Charles I. in the best days of the Long Parliament as to feel any enthusiasm for promoting the return of Charles II., and they would not swell the crowd that waited

Feb. 1,
1660.

upon Monk at every stage of his progress to London. Margaret Elmes writes to reproach her brother. 'I wonder one soe exsackt in all thinges as your selfe is, should let soe greate a person as Moncke is to pas by soe neare you, without your invitation, or att least your going to compliment him with sum of your Neighbors; I see nothings can make you stur from your beloved Claydon.'

Feb. 7,
1660.

'Lord Fiennes is gone to Broughton,' writes the Doctor, '& would not sitt because they act on a Commonwealth Bottom. If a free election come & he be chosen, he will sitt, or if this sitts & the Lords called in (of which there is some hopes) then he will sitt as two houses. I can say noe more but that if you are not a member, I misse of my aime.'

Feb. 8,
1660.

Sir Roger writes on the 8th: 'Monck was at the house on Munday last who expresst himself so obscurely that most men know not what construction for to make of it': Sir Roger was not in love with the Sphinx. He adds a post-script the next day: 'The Common Council was very stiff yesterday & will not submit to taxes, & would not own the Parl^t. Souldiers are gone this morning into the Citty, I suppose to reduce them, they will only make addresses to Monck.' Dr. Denton gives some further details. 'Just now newes is come that Monke & all his Army is marched into the Citty, on the occasion of the Common Council beinge mighty high last night in giving the Warwickshire gentleman great thanks (volens, nolens the L^d Maior) promising to live and dy with them. It works apace now.' Monk was ordered by the Council of State to repress by force what was in effect a Royalist pronouncement by the City: he obeyed, and the City was overawed. 'Bristol for certaine,' Dr. Denton continues, 'standes on their guard & will admitt noe souldiers. They that desired to passe through the other day, were dismounted at the gate leaving their horses & their Armes, & marched 10 & 10 quite through, with 10 & 10 of the city guard betweene each 10 of them; & when quite out of the citty had then delivered to them, their horses & armes again. There are your men, Sir.'

Feb. 9,
1660.

Monk's attack upon the City nearly wrecked his own reputation as well as its gates and portcullises, but he saw his mistake, and retrieved it in a moment. Dr. Denton tells the story: '13th of February, 12 at night. . . . As soon as Monke had sent the enclosed letter to the house [requiring them to fill up their numbers at once, and to dissolve on the 6th of May to make room for a newly elected Parliament], he presently drew his army into the citty beinge Satterday & complied with the Citizens, which was quickly spread, & uppon which there were bonfires circum circa, & from one end of the city to the other, Westminster etc. & with such joy & acclamation as was never yett seene. The Speaker (who sate late) in his march homewards affronted, his men beaten, his windowes broken. A Rump in A chayre rosted at his gates, & bonfires made there. Never so many rumpes rosted as were that night. What this will produce nemo scit. About 12 A clock this day at noone, it was generally beleevd it would prove Ignis fatuus, for that Monke was strongly looked for to dine with some Grantees at White Hall, but did not. . . . If you goe to Twiford tell my Lord he lost such sport by going out of towne that he is never like to see the like.' It was evidently hopeless for Kate to get her doctor away.

The news is running like wildfire through Hampshire, where several private letters have been received. John Stewkeley rejoices that General Monk 'hath declared for a single Person (you may Imagin whom) and for a Free Parliament. . . . We may all soon meet if the Wind blow from Flanders: w^{ch} I pray for, pro Re: pro Ecle. Ang: pro reg: as a Subject, as a member, as an Englishman.'

Feb. 14,
1660.

The contrary report prevailed in London two days later. Dr. Denton is 'out of tune.' 'Monke inclines to much to favor an Ingagement for A Republiq without King, single person or house of Lords. . . . The expected writts should issue to-morrow, they will be chosen the old way.'

The streets are full of soldiers. Pen, looking out of the windows of her London lodging, writes: 'I wish Munke may be so happy a Parson to this poore distressed Land,

Feb 15,
1660.

that he may meritt Applause from all parsons, as yett I am not so much taking with him, as to delight my self with aney sight of his men.'

Feb 16,
1660

Sir Roger sends his version of the reconciliation between Monk and the City and 'of the great joy that was conceived by inconsiderat persons (which were very numerous) by reason of his letter, which they pleased themselves with those constructions their phancies made of it, & no expressions were wanting to it. The bells & fyres fully discovered rather what they would have, then what they had : out of the same mouths proceed blessings & curses, for they who cursed him the day before for pulling down the gates, blesst him this day for coming into them. On Sunday thousands resorted to St. Paul's Church, to get a sight of him. He hath continued there ever since & severall of his forces at the Citty charge, who entertaine them with much seeming contentment . . . What Monck will do to answer the expectations of all parties, I am to seek—though very many may be deceived, I shall be non of them. . . . Addresses are still made to him, people will not be quett. Lambert summoned to come in by this day, which if he refuse to doe then to be sequestred. This morning I was told that he was come in, which is contrary to what I heard yesterday. . . There are nothing but riddles asked.'

Feb. 18,
1660.

The Doctor writes : 'You may longe to heare of the fruits of the Bonafires, I can only in briefe tell you this, that all sides ply Monke with warm cloaths & he like a prudent person would fayne reconcile. I heare that he offered the seclused if they would only promise not to bringe in the King, that he did not doubt but to procure their sittinge. Dick Norton told him that Freedom of Parl^t was the just right & interest of the nation & if they thought it fitt to bringe in the Turke, they ought not to be imposed on the contrary. Last night 10 & 10 of Rumpers & Secluders met before the Generall ; the result of which I cannot yet learne, but I doubt nothinge but wranglinge.'

Feb. 21,
1660.

Sir Roger announces the vote which would enable Sir Ralph to take his seat again, after sixteen years of 'seclusion.'

'Sir, without the least preamble to it or giving you an account of what pass't in order to the last and most unexpected turne you may by this understande that the secluded members, by the assistance of Gen^l Monck, were readmitted this day into the house in which place he was voted Cap^t Gen^l of all the forces of Eng^l Scot^l & Ire^l under the Paull, Lawson to continue vice-Admirall.'

Dr. Denton writes the next day. 'Moncke brought in the secluded members who act & vote as formally as before, & take
 noe notice of anythunge. Our Cozen Greenville hath lost him-
 selfe most wonderfully amongst his countrymen in refusinge
 to doe as other neighbours did, noe man dissentinge but him-
 selfe Sir R. Piggott hath done little lesse. Sir R. T[emple]
 carries it plum on all sides; he writt to Dick Winwood by
 coach yesterday, he havinge notice over night that it would
 be We knewe nothings till about 9 A clock. I have sent
 to hasten Dick W. to his duty, they are all earnestly desired.
 I wish my Lord Wenman were in a condicon to come up.'

Feb. 22,
1660.

Penelope rejoices 'above all that by this new & great chang' she has lived to see her brother 'one more in a Capacitie to sarve the Country.' 'It would vex me to the hart to have us both out,' writes Dr. Denton, eager in the general excitement to add to the duties of his over-busy life; 'but if Cavaliers are to be excludet we shall be triumpt.' There is also a talk of Sir Ralph standing for Westbury, Bedwin, or Malton. He at first fights shy of election expenses, as the parliament is expected to be a very short one.

Kind congratulations pour in. Sir Henry Leo has just heard 'of the great news at London': 'I assure you,' he
 writes to Sir Ralph, 'it is the best wee have had this many
 years & trewly I am very glad Sir R. Var: intends to serve
 his Country & friends in that Hon^{ble} imployment.' He
 offers to use his int-rest on Sir Ralph's behalf, and desires
 to see him 'at Ditchley, though I confesse it has nothing
 that deserves an invitation from Cladon, though I can
 promise no person to be more wellcome then yourselfe.'
 His mother, Lady Rochester, at once sets her agents to

Feb. 23,
1660.

work, and writes to Mr. Thomas Yates to secure seats for Sir Ralph and her son in the elections for what was emphatically called a Free Parliament, though the electors seemed amiably ready to submit to the Countess's dictation, and to acknowledge it as 'their duty to their Country & their younge Lande-Ladyes to serve Sir Ralph therein.'

Lady Rochester lays Mr. Appletree, whom she had been asked to support, 'absolutely aside,' and she will not mind if her 'brother St. John be not chosen' as Sir Ralph 'is a person whose owne merits is such, as it will bee a happinesse to the place, and they will have cause to give us thanks for him; besides his relation to the children's businesse, obleiges me to doe him any service hee shall command if there should be noe oath imposed nor engagement Sr Raphe will accept of it himselfe, and if there should be any reason to divert him, I shall desire it for his sonne. Good Mr Yates, next to my sonne Lee, let not Sr Raphe Verney faile of being chosen. . . .'

Sir Ralph thinks the election may be managed 'if Mr Yates bee quicke & cordiall.' Westbury is to be tried first, and if that fails he is to be put up at Great Bedwin. He is in no hurry to claim his seat in 'Rumpe Major,' but is ready to stand if there is really to be 'a Free Parliament without any oath or engagement.' Mr. Yates makes zealous professions—'if I should be wanting, I should neyther answer it to God, my Country, my Lady Rochester nor you.'

Lady Rochester has her hands full with the property belonging to her first husband's children and grandchildren and the political patronage that went with it. 'Here is such a doe,' she writes to Sir Ralph, 'about providing for burgeses place the nex perlement, I have ben soe trobeled with Solicitors, for those places in the children's estate that it has bin very troublesom too mee, but I put them all off with telling them that I am alredey promised as far as my interest goes; I hope that Yates wilbe carefull in securing a place for you & my sonne Lee, & those will bee as many as wee can compas. The towne of Mamsbery sent too my Sonne Lee that if hee would come in person they did hope

March 2,
1660.

too chuse him, though there were at least thurteine that did sue too bee choose in that towne, soe my Sonne meancs too goe thether at the election for feare of the worst.’

Sir Ralph writes to the young man himself, who had ‘excused his coming to Claydon’. ‘I wish your land at Ditchley were as dirty as the Isle of Doggs (& as rich too) and then perhapps you would thinke our Vale habitable.’

The rush for seats in the parliament of 1660 was in marked contrast with the difficulty of getting candidates to stand under Cromwell’s rule; the great interest and importance of the crisis was fully understood, and the part the House of Commons was to play in it. Edmund Verney has ‘a very greate desire to serve in Parliament. . . . to advance my understanding unto a higher piche, by learning the intrigues of my owne native contry, whereof I am wholly ignorant.’ Dr. Hyde encouraged his ambition while advising him to ‘expect the qualifications now hammering here. Every day produces such vanitye of Contradictions, it is not possible to write any certaintie as yet. . . . but certeynly I shall never advise you to hazard your Fortune, much lesse your Honour or Conscience for a little improvement of your experience.’

Jan. 80,
1660

Edmund had asked Dr. Hyde to send him some books, but he advises him to wait till he returns to towne, ‘then you are sure to please your selfe in the print, volume and edition. To spend this vacation y^r Father’s studdy or the Parson’s will furnish you.’ His further counsel would not come amiss to a young member of Parliament of to-day. He considered there was much profit to be derived ‘by sitting, learning, observing and voting there.’ Edmund doubted his power of taking part in debate, and was conscious of some hesitation and imperfection in his speech. ‘I have no English Authors to supply my want of words, but I’ll be watchfull least I precipitate myselfe into any discourse, which shall exhaust my treasure of words so farr as to endanger the driving mee to a nonplus.’ The lawyer is of opinion that more speakers fail for lack of thoughts than for faults of manner. ‘Above all,’ he says, ‘the Resolution of

deliberating and resolving what to say before you speak, will certeynly furnish you with words as well as matter, especially if you be carefull to speake the sense thoroughly, & avoyd the catch or repetition of the last word or syllable which fell from you. All which Time & Observance of yourselfe will certeynly produce. These things I should not inculcate to you whoe understand them soe well, but that I must find somewhat to fill my paper besides expressions of my strong affection for you.'

Feb. 29,
1660

Dr. Denton writes that it is generally believed the Parliament 'will dissolve this weeke; the sooner the better, for under the Rose I have noe faith in Rumpe Major.'

March 1,
1660.

'Rumpe Maior begins to smell as ranke as Rumpe Minor, I knowe noe man pleased with their proceedings, here are great feares & jealousies that they have a mind to establish themselves, & to re-establish Richard . . . which is all at present, & enough to burne. . . .'

March 1,
1660.

Doll Smith, sending for money, writes: 'I sent too barrors becaus I was afrajd to venture one of them alone now the souldiers are about.'

March 8,
1660.

'Yours of 28th Febr. I received not till late last night & that by chance,' writes Dr. Denton. 'The truth is Kate was in fault for she received it, & put it in her pockett and never thought of it till then. The face of things begins to looke a Squint. The officers all day yesterday in great consultation & it is said they will declare high against the militias, A single person, & House of Lords etc. What the issue will be, nemo scit. I shall want a little hay dust to sow the holes in the parnage yard, I pray let Will gather me a little out of the barne, I beeleeve a peck may serve. . . . The militia of Bucks is passed & I thinke neyther you nor Mun were not put in.' The lists were apparently of men excluded, as the Doctor rejoices that Edmund is now qualified to serve. 'Your son is turned Jockey (which you know I like bravely) beinge on Satterday brought in a Rider for the Militia in to the House.' He adds a week later: 'I wish Mun much ioy of his new office, but he hath pittifull comrades,' and Sir Roger writes on the

23rd: 'The bills for the Militia are passed; & as I understand it M^r Verney's name is amongst the Commissioners'

'Doctor Owen is like to give up to Doctor Kinnolly as to the Deanerie of Christ Church,' writes Dick Winwood. 'Sir Arthur is summoned to the house to answer some factiousness, Lambert is in the Tower.' March 9,
1660.

'Lord Allington is dead of the smallpox,' writes the Doctor. 'This day Pryn moved not to dissolve, & for King & Lords with an appeale to the gentlemen of the Longe Robe to answer his arguments. He spake almost an houre. M^r Annesley answered ingeniously confessinge his Arguments were not to be answered yet moved to dissolve. Chief Justice St. John though present spake not one word. He hath definitely lost himselfe by actinge soe like a sollicitour for a Commonwealth, to have a Parliament moulded as in '54, & to have Scotland & Ireland included therem It is Haver du Poix whether they dissolve, or dissolve not, but most think they must dissolve.' March 9,
1660

'They are resolved on my Brother Sherard, both for Knight [of the shire] and the Militia. I beleeeve Sir Richard Temple doth hope the gentry will offer it to him, & if they doe I beleeeve he will with many acknowledgments & much civility devolve it upon them againe, because he is sure elsewhere, & soe I hope are you except your Dr horse you out, which he longs to doe. . . . If you can gett in T^le looke to your deere & trees & buildinge to, for I love them all though I cannot manage them soe well as you.' Nancy writes her special news on the back of her father's letter. 'Youre furnity had broght forth a very fin keten for you, but by ill fortun sumthing kiled her keteus & she proved very unnatureall & eat them up which is a gret greve to hir that is your duty full god daughter A. D.' March 14,
1660.

We watch the last dying throes of the Long Parliament. 'The house sat this day in order to a dissolution,' writes Sir Roger, 'but could not reach it, though they did not rise till nine at night . . . tomorrow they will dissolve, so much as in them lies, I longe for the time & for an opportunity of' March 15,
1660.

waiting upon you. . . . Bishop Wren voted out of the Tower.'

March 17,
1660.

Sir Roger writes again: 'Sir we are now at liberty though much against some of our wills: after many sad paings & groanes at last we did expire, and now are in another world. Yesterday morning the bill for presbiterie & that for the 20,000*l*. for the generall passed, & by vote he is made steward for Hampton Court & the Parke, & so is at liberty to take the ayre when he pleases. About 6 o'clock we passed the bill of dissolution, with a perfect salvo to the rights & priviledges of the Lord's house after some opposition. Ther wanted not offers or a declaration of a higher nature which was to cleare the house from the guilt of the King's blood; but this being by prudent men thought unnecessary in regard of our revoking & obliterating those votes which put us out of the house grounded upon that vote which was made by us the longe night; so that that vote now stands good, & we think ourselves cleared from anything that followed. However some were pleased to protest & declare against it as an execrable act. Sir, theise were the last passages of that so long lived Parliament, which is not dead before, I question whether it lives not yet . . . though I may be dead as to a politick capacity, yet so longe as I live in any capacity, you may confidently call me & look upon me as, Sir, your faithful humble servant R. B.'

March 22,
1660.

'Since the dissolution we have had but little newes, but that Ireland would fain stand upon its own legges, yet willing to decline a separation from us, what they declare seem to be riddles to me. . . . The Generall & Councell of State were invited to bed & board in to the Citty . . . the first they refused, not apprehending their condition to be so full of dainger as the Citty did, the latter they have accepted, & next Wednesday the Drapers treate them, & Generall Moncks Lady is the very single person of her sex that is courted to it.'

The last show of armed resistance came from Lambert, and he was routed by Tom's old Colonel, Dick Ingoldsby,

a regicide whom the 'turning wheels of vicissitude' had brought round to the Royalist side, though he cheerfully declared that the King would probably cut his head off as soon as he landed.

And now the qualifications for candidates were being keenly discussed all through the country. Doctor writes to Sir Ralph: 'I doe thinke to try my fortune Att Mutton March 17,
1660 Therefore make sure of Lady Rochester's place if possible, for the house will not be altogether soe comfortable if we be pated . . . I ghesse your being of the Parliament soe longe after Edge Hill may perhaps lett you in, especially consideringe the temper the next House is like to be of.' Sir Ralph becomes more keen about his own election as the time draws nearer; his cautious economy is forgotten. 'As to any matter of charge, I shall readily disburse it,' he writes to Yates; 'those things are not to bee had Drily March 11,
1660 you know there is a time to cast away as well as a time to keepe, therefore being a meane stranger to all those persons and places, I must needs intreate you to doe both what & when & how you thinke fit . . . if you thinke it fit for me to doe anything or move in any kinde my selfe, if you beleve they expect it from me, let me but know it. . . . I confesse I would be very loath to receive a Moyle . . . if they will not chuse me, the lesse I appeare, the better it will bee.' Such electioneering would seem easy indeed, to the harassed and hunted candidate of to-day.

Even before the elections Royalists who had lain low were showing signs of life. Robert Leslie, who had an interest in Sir Edmund Verney's patent for hackney coaches, reminds Sir Ralph of it. 'Tis true in Cromwell's time,' writes Sir Ralph, as of something long past and over, 'some rules were made about Hackney Coaches, but unlesse a Parliament settle it, I doubt nothing else can doe it.' Leslie would be loath to beg, he has never done it, but as Sir Ralph has succeeded to his father's fortunes he 'must suckside to his cindnes for his ould frend, not onle with a littell mone, but with a gelding fit for a nold man to meete his Majeste on.'

April 16,
1660.

The brother Lady Rochester had been so willing to disappoint was taking his own measures. Mun writes to Dr. Hyde, from Claydon: 'St Walter St. Johns and my father are chosen, but theyr election will be disputed, because that two persons more are returned which were put in by my Lord of Hertford. I perceive that I shall not be one of this parliament though if it had pleased my father I might have been elected in 2 places of this county from whence I write unto you.'

The elections proceeded amidst great popular excitement. The Cavaliers, far from being 'mumped,' were elected in large numbers. Dr. Deuton writes a long list of their friends who are returned, but, alas! after all the scheming neither he nor Sir Ralph is of the number. Doctor at the last yielded his interest at Malton to 'Phil Howard & M^r Marwood who served in Dick's Parliament a very short session & at there very great charge, as I heare neare 200*l*.' There was much courteous communication between the candidates, neither wishing to stand in the other's way, but Doctor looks on this as 'noe Parl^t & that it will just call in—etc. if that It is the next must ratify & act the greater things & he hopes to be of that.'

March 28,
1660.

Lady Rochester's agents are afraid of her displeasure, though they have done their utmost to fulfil her honoured commands. Thomas Baxter has said much at Westbury 'of Sir Ralph's interest & great abilities,' and is 'going to-morrow to Bedwin. . . . My Lord Marquis [of Hertford] notwithstanding some application hath beene made on Sir Ralph's behalf . . . useth all the endeavours that can be possible against us. . . . If you but saw the straining actings, & the straining people we have to deale with, you would admire.'

April 8,
1660.

'In many places,' writes Dr. Hyde to Edmund, 'Secluded Members and Rumpers are equally scorned, and in truth Neither Barrell is better Herring. I could wish you joyned with Sir R. Beryton, or some other thorough paced gentleman' for I have a mind to translate the odious French word into that English one. Let nicknames and

distinctive expressions continue upon Factionists, Calvinists, and Lutherans & to diversifie Sectaryes. Only the Right Christian is the Catholike.'

'The violence & rashnes of the King's party disorders & distempers all,' writes the Doctor anxiously. 'The Gallican Ministers have written to ours assuring them that the King is a very good Protestant and much on his behalf'; the pendulum had not ceased to vibrate, Dr. Denton writes: 'Here is great noise of Lambert's beinge at the head of 20 troopes, 3,000 foot, taken Warwick Castle, the country comminge a maine to him, but not a word true. The worst newes is the K's interest cooles beyond expectacion, through the indiscretion of his rantinge party as its said, but I beleeeve tis through the designe of some others, though they have been foolish enough.'

April 4,
1660.

April 6,
1660.

April 17,
1660.

When the Convention Parliament met on the 25th of April, 1660, England was in a frantic hurry to fetch the exile from over the water, and, as in another great revulsion of popular feeling, the sole question men asked their neighbours seemed to be, 'Why are ye the last to bring the King back to his house?'

The news from London roused the whole country. 'Such universall acclamations of wilde & sober joy I never yet saw,' wrote Mr. Butterfield in the first bright days of May; 'we had our Bonfire too & Bells ringing even at Claydon. . . . Heaven & earth seeme to conspire to make a faire and fruitfull springe of plenty & joy to this poore kingdome; the seasonableness of which mercy now the generall face of Christendom seems to looke peaceable, adds much to our present happines. The fields & pastures begin to put on their best dresse as if it were to entertaine his Majesty in Triumph, & make him in love with his Native soyle. . . . Sure in the Middest of all our rejoyceings it wilbe very difficult to satisfy ye Expectations of men and for Majesty to walk so evenly as not to give offence to our formerly dissenting grundeas; ye Lord give them all wisdome and moderation.' But misgivings were for the moment drowned in the chorus of jubilation.

An old blind prophet there was indeed, living far above the dust and tumult of the street, who made one passionate appeal after another to Monk, to the parliament, and to the nation. 'By returning of our own foolish accord, nay running into the same bondage, we make vain & vile than dirt,' he said, 'the blood of so many thousand faithful & valiant Englishmen, who left us in this liberty, bought with their lives; losing by a strange after game of folly all the battles we have won, all the treasure we have spent.' But the men and women in the street, weary of strife and harassing suspense, saw not what the prophet saw from his watch-tower, and gave little heed to his trumpet-blast. 'My head is so testicated with the times, between hope & fear, I know not what I do; if things be not as I hope, my heart will break, I cannot outlive it,' said one anxious woman, 'but I do not despair for I am confident it will be.'¹ 'I pray God send we may live to see peace in our times,' pleaded another, 'and that friends may live to in joye each other.'² Such homely words as these explain the Restoration, for London held but one Milton, and the voices in the street were many.

¹ Lady Hobart, March 22, 1660.

² Penelope Denton, March 8, 1659.



COTTAGES AT EAST CLAYDON

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE WOOING OF MARY ABELL.

1660-1662.

WHILE England was enduring 'the miseries of a Civil War, and the many and fruitless attempts towards Settlements, upon imaginary Forms of Government,' a Royalist merchant, William Abell, left the City of London, bought the manor of East Claydon, with the White House, and tried to bury himself in the safe obscurity of the life of a country squire. He bore a name which was unpleasantly notorious. William Abell the elder, Master of the Vintners' Company, had been the King's tool in his illegal attempts to tax the City Companies; to escape the gibes and caricatures showered

upon him in London during the Protectorate, he fled to Holland.

Before the troubles, his son had married 'Anne, daughter of John Wakering and Mary Palmer his wife,' of an old family of small landowners, at Kelvedon, in Essex. Their eldest child, Mary Abell, was born there, 'on the 5th of April 1641,' and baptized on the 17th, the next year a son, Thomas, was born on the 18th of May, baptized in Kelvedon Church on the 29th, and buried there on the 30th of August. Anne Abell survived her boy but a few months, 'she dyed 22nd January 1643, and was buried in St. Peter's Church in St. Albans.' The widower settled down on his newly acquired property, and here his little daughter grew up, the pride of the village, and the darling of her quiet home, but far removed from whatever advantages town breeding and good society could bestow.

East Claydon would, however, have repudiated any idea of remoteness or rusticity. Was it not known to all the world that the high-road from London to Buckingham passed through it, and that the London coach stopped to bait at Squire Abell's substantial Village Inn, where a fine wainscoted parlour received the passengers who might wish to taste the excellent home-brewed ale? Plaistow, too, the London carrier, had his abode here; and the Church books showed an admixture of outside influences unknown to the retired parish of Middle Claydon. In 1641 there was quite a sensational entry of the death and burial of Mercy Hawkins, of Greetworth, in the county of Northampton, 'a passenger from London.'¹

¹ At a time when some half-dozen Christian names sufficed for all the boys and girls, gentle and simple, of the neighbourhood, the variety in East Claydon is quite remarkable. With the Puritan taste for Bible names—Nahb, Ezia, Jonas, Josias, Judith, Deborah, Lydia, Susannah and the like, the older names have kept their ground, and Christopher, Michael, Benedict, Agnes, Audrey, Christian (as a girl's name), Constance, Dorothy, Elnor, Ursula, Priscilla, and Petronilla are amongst the names of the village children. The Welsh element, represented by Ellis, Hugh, Pierce, and Winifred, may, perhaps, be traced to the household of the Vicars Owen Gwynn (1583) and Maurice Gryffyth (1624 to 1663).

The White House was then 'a handsome dwelling, with numerous gables, heavy stacks of chimneys, mullioned windows, and piers surmounted with stone balls' It has now shrunk to smaller proportions, but the upper story overhangs picturesquely, and the beautiful Jacobean porch still remains. The small mullioned bow-window of Mary's parlour, built up in the intervening century, has recently been brought to light. The ornamental brickwork of the garden wall, and the clipped box hedges, retain a respectable flavour of antiquity.

William Abell the widower kept up his friendship with his wife's family, who were usefully connected with the Protector's Government; her brother, Dionysius Wakering, married Anne Everard, daughter of an Essex baronet, and their only surviving child, Mary, married Oliver St. John's son. 'Aunt Wakering,' who appears as a widow during Mary's girlhood, seems to have married again late in life Cromwell's General, Desborough.

While Mary was still a child, William Abell returned to Essex for a wife, another Mary, whose family name has been lost; she was related to the Wakerings through the Wisemans, a connection difficult to trace, as there were three Essex baronets of that name in the time of the Stuarts; the Verneys were related to them through Sir Ralph's wife.¹

The second Mrs. Abell proved an excellent stepmother, and Mary was tenderly attached to her. Squire Abell's

¹ To complicate matters still further, Mary, the second Mrs. Abell, married a Wiseman after her first husband's death; when standing sponsor to her stepdaughter's child in February 1666, she is described as 'the Lady Wiseman, wife of Sir Richard Wiseman and relict of William Abell'; in September 1667, she writes to her stepdaughter from Woodham-Walter, signing herself 'Mary Fytche,' and the latter replies telling her of the death of Wm. Meade, the Parish Clerk, and others of her acquaintance in East Claydon; Mrs. Fytche is said (November 27, 1667) to be staying at the house of her brother [in law?] Sir Wm. Wiseman, and to be adopting one of her late husband's sons; she seems therefore to have lost two husbands and married a third within seven years.

property adjoined Sir Ralph Verney's, and their dwelling-houses were scarce two miles apart, but with such widely different opinions and antecedents there was some instinctive dislike and rivalry between them. The boundary hedges and ditches afforded the usual subjects of dispute between country neighbours; and when Mr. Abell's cattle and sheep broke through some neglected gap and were promptly put in the pound, Sir Ralph took it that Mr. Abell 'intended to quarrel, and that he must order his affairs accordingly.' Edmund Verney was probably the only young man in the Claydons who knew nothing of the gentle maiden his nearest neighbour.

May 21,
1660.

When the Restoration was imminent, and it became profitable to furbish up the rusty memory of a Royalist ancestor, William Abell emerged from his retirement with an enthusiasm of obsequious loyalty, which the old Bucks squires looked upon as officious and absurd. 'Mr. Abell's Collection for the poore King, and the various aspects and humours seen upon his Majesty's proclayminge' at East Claydon were among the jokes of the county 'Mr. Abell read the King's letter and declaration to his neighbours after church,' writes Mr. Butterfield, 'and haveing shewed them what a gracious King they had, he moves them to see what they would do for him; and to begin lays downe 9*l*. 16*s*. 2*d*. which was his owne proportion of the mounthly taxe, and soe desires the like of them all rich and poore. . . . 25*l*. was gathered, and to Aylesbury he and some other of his Neighbours carryed it, where they would have payed it to the Treasurer, but he would none of it, as haveing no order to receive it; then at the Potty Sessions he sends to the Justices to acquaint them of the money; they made themselves merry at it, but would not take the money. So I heare he has now come up to London it may be to meet his Majesty and acquaint him with his doings, for he told his neighbours the King should know of their forwardness . . . Mr. Townshend [Rector of Radelive] told me I should see this would be expected from us all. I laughed at him and made him augry. Sure that man is also strangely trans-

ported with this new change, he talks and preaches and does wondrously.' No Stuart King ever frowned upon a worshipper who offered up the incense of hard cash; and we find William Abell in October, '60, as a Captain of Foot, among the gentlemen of the County of Bucks, named to command the Trained Bands, and advanced in due time to further honours.

Sir Ralph and his son spent that gay summer of 1660 in town; Mun is studying 'the elements of Civil Law, but has reached,' he confesses, 'no great height of knowledge therein.' 'The Merry Monarch' was receiving a welcome frantic in its enthusiasm. Everybody who aspired to be anybody expected office at Court, though there were not nearly places enough to go round. Colonel Henry Verney applied for the post of a gentleman-in-waiting, backed up by 'my Lady Peto, Lady Omon, and Sir Harry Newton.' Edmund desired 'a troop' and a 'red ribbon' of the Bath. 'The King,' he writes, 'intends to be crowned the first Thursday after Candlemasse Day, unlesse the Duke of Gloucester's death deferre it . . . but I thinke Princes doe not usually mourn so long.' 'Sir Richard Temple, and a yong ladd of a very greate estate and of my name, one Greville Verney,'¹ are to be among the new knights; 'the way had been only to acquaint my Lord Manchester that such a gentleman had a desire to be knight of the Bath, and to give in his name, which he is obliged to present to the King, who denies no man who will be at the charges.'² Edward Fust was made a baronet and the King gave him his picture and 'a silver mounted sword with the 12 Apostles beautifully engraved thereon.' Even Heron, Edmund's servant, 'a good sightly fellow, who writes well and is in all respects fit to serve any gentleman,' is inclined to pick a quarrel with his master, that he may be free to seek 'a place at court,' or at worst as 'a comedian' in one of the reopened

¹ An ancestor of Lord Willoughby de Broke, of Compton Verney.

² The expenses are not given in detail, but the following year (June 5, 1662) the fees for Sir William Ayscough's knighthood amounted to 60*l.* 10*s.* : a baronetcy was said to cost 900*l.*

theatres. 'To quit your service to turn Player,' writes Sir Ralph, 'will be for neither of your credits. . . Players and Fiddlers are treated with ignominy by our lawes, and truly I should be sorry to see him in such debased company.'

Jan 17,
1661.

Dr. Denton alone gets more than he wants. 'A feather in my capp,' he writes, 'a warrant to be sworne in ordinary with a Reserve of my Priority and Seniority, but what to do with it now I have it, I doe not know. I shall make noe hast to be sworne . . . amonge other Inconveniencies I doubt swearinge may ingage me to ride at the Coronation, and I have noe great mind to squander away 100% . . . Dr. Bate and Dr. Manton have refused theire Deaneries.'

March,
1661.

Mun's friend Dr. Thomas Hyde succeeds Dr. Zouch at the Admiralty. More business came upon Sir Ralph than ever, his friends who had served 'the late Usupers of Government' were much persecuted by 'malitious persons', there were pardons to be procured, suits pending before the House of Lords, 'and Lords are leadious persons to waite on'; there were threadbare Royalists like 'Mr. Kenelm Digby to be certified as being Loyal and Indigent,' and Sir Ralph, as a Deputy-Lieutenant, was constantly receiving proclamations about the raising of the Militia, the prosecution of 'Anabaptists, Quakers, Fifth Monarchy Men, and other Fanaticks,' and the dispersing of their meetings.

Jan 18,
1661.

There is a long correspondence with Cousin Thomas Stafford about the meeting of the Trained Bands at Winslow, where his son, Captain Edmund Stafford, is to be in command. He has 'my Ld. Leift's Commission with some instructions,' but there are only 14 pikes and 'he needs that the Collours, Leading Staffe, Partizans, Halberts, Musketts & Drums should be ready, that he may be in an equipage to march, trayne & exercise his company, according to the moderne discipline of warr.' The County is also raising a 'Volunteer Troop of Horse' to meet at Aylesbury. Sir Wm. Smith 'exceedingly approves the designe' and will send a horse or two; he is unable to appear in person, being

Jan. 30,
1661

summoned 'by my Lord Treasurer to wait upon him, about some affairs of His Majesty's'

Sir Ralph was no courtier, but he began to consider whether some of the patents granted to Sir Edmund could be revived, and whether his office of Knight-Marshal might not be fittingly bestowed on his son; rough drafts of petitions were drawn up in which a good deal was said about his father's heroic death, and his own exile and decimation, which would have touched the Standard Bearer's sense of humour. Charles II., more anxious, as the Royalists complained, to conciliate an opponent than to reward a friend, made Sir Ralph Verney a baronet. Mun speaks of 'this Age of Universall concessions,' and affirms that the 'Revolution hath changed the face of the whole Nation which was heavy and discontented into cheerfulness & joy.' 'Merely soe generally rules the land, that Traytors themselves are preferred to their desires.'

March 16,
1661

Feb. 11,
1661.

'The happy change that wee have lately had in England, makes us now begin to plant again,' writes Sir Ralph to Monsieur Pappin at Blois, 'in hopes that we, or our children, may reape the frute in peace, under our good & gracious King, whose vertues are more honour to him, then his Crownes, & whose zeal & constancy in religion, are like to make him the Head & Protector of all the Reformed churches in Europe'; and on the strength of these conclusions Sir Ralph begs his friend to send him a large consignment of vines of the early ripe Auvergnac grape.

The King rode from the Tower to Whitehall the day before his Coronation; Lady Newton's sister Anne Murray, a devout Royalist lady who had known him from boyhood, watched his progress with breathless interest, imputing to him the pious thoughts that filled her own mind. Sir Ralph and Mun witnessed the Coronation in Westminster Abbey. Dr. Morley, whom we last met poking about the old bookstalls at the Hague, bemoaning the triumphs of anarchy and schism, was now preaching the Coronation sermon in full canonicals as Bishop of Worcester; poor starved Dr. Cosins had become Prince Bishop of Durham; and Sir Frederick

April 28,
1661.

Cornwallis, who shared Sir Ralph's imprisonment at Whitehall, was conspicuous as Treasurer of the Household. While in so splendid a scene old friends met again, there seemed in the excitement of the moment no room for any feelings but those of mutual congratulation. 'Did I not know you very well,' writes Sir Ralph to Doll, 'I should think you little less than a Phanaticke, for being absent at this great solemnitie.' 'No pen nor ink can express the gallantry of the nobility,' writes another eye-witness, 'who are today in their Parliament robes, I would have enlarged but we are so busie with looking at bonfiers and fireworkes.'¹

Luce Sheppard is now installed at Burleigh, where 'the littell ladie thrives well under her tuition'; my Lord of Exeter has a dispensation from his Majesty, which relieves him of attendance at the Coronation, much to Luce's disappointment. Mun's account of it to his old friend is more affectionate than instructive. 'Had your affairs allowed me the happiness of Personall attendance on you at the coronation, the joy of the day had been mightilye improved. The solemnitye and lustre thereof you have scene from a pen more cerleyne and polite than myne can bee; yet I must say againe, I missed you there'

'Sweet Cossen,' writes Doll Leeke, 'I beleve you came to towne to se all the bravery, and truly by the relation of it, it was worth your time. . . . I se you have don better for your sonn, then he was abell to do for him self, he is no knight of the Bath, which he did not question to get, but you have given him somthing which will advantag his family for ever. . . . You se I am not to be tented with fine sights to come to Loundon; the truth is I spent all my mouney when I was ther, and must take a longer time to recrut. All that bravery wold have made me malincoly, I am much finer in my ould clothes in the Country, then I should have been ther. Your coronation sute will serve us, ther fore pray come to Croshall.' 'Loundon I am not like to see a long tinc, for traveling alone is both chargable and unhansom for a woman.'

¹ Fleming MSS. 442, *Hist. MSS. Comm.*

Sir Ralph claims 20*l* from his son 'for killing my Black ^{April 29,} ^{1661.} bald Nagg; with much difficulty hee came home, but in such a case as . . . never poore beast was worse. There fell a humour into his hinder legg, which swelled it as bigg as your Wast, and in a short time it gangren'd, and became cold and Rotten, soe he is now devidid amongst my Carpes.' Edmund denies that he had over-ridden the nag, '*mais la pauvre beste N'avoit gueres envie de marcher, et certes je ne le pouvois blamer, car sans doute il cognoissoit par clarté de Nature, que chasque pas qu'il alloit (quoyque fort petit) le hastoit aux Ombres eternels.*' Sir Ralph has 'lost his stomach a little,' and takes to ship bisenit for breakfast.

Meanwhile the heiress-hunting for Mun continues. After Mary Tetre's final rejection, Mun himself had relapsed into indifference. Sir Ralph and Aunt Isham were still in pursuit of 'Mr. Bacchus' daughter, and heiress, who reappears as 'the widow of a Mr. Bishop.' Anne Hobart had her own widow to recommend, Sir Edward Alstone's daughter, who had just thrown Lord Paget over, and was in treaty against her father's wishes with 'the son of Lord Coleraine.' Sir Edward Alstone, who preferred the Verney alliance, was conferring with Dr. Denton, and so the dreary comedy dragged on.

My Lord Sandwich's fleet was starting for Lisbon, and Edmund writes: '*J'ai grandissime envie d'aller en Portugall* ^{May 11,} ^{1661.} *pour faire part du train de nostre Reyne qui sera.*' 'As for your Portugal voyage,' Sir Ralph replies, 'I looke uppon it as a Fantasticall Dreame. Can you bee soe sencelesse as to thinke that Portugall is your way to Wooe the Widdow? Beeleeve me Mun, the Widdow must bee your Quene, and tis well if you can get her with all the freindes and industry you have.'

Doll Locke contributes her mite of evidence as to the good impression Catherine of Braganza made on her arrival. 'My sister says the qucen is very hansom, and I hear very ^{May 21} ^{1662.} stricte in hir carage, and all that is with hir modest and reserved. I hope it will work upon some of our wild ladys to make them more grave.' Her portrait at Claydon does

not bear out Anne Hobart's charitable opinion of the Queen's good looks. Her expression is sensible and gentle, but the features are heavy and commonplace.

Edmund's own love-making did not prosper; his Widow is 'in a cooling condition,' and his 'late letters have seemed much unconcerned, and rather doubtfull then hopefull of it.' 'God's Will bee donne,' writes Sir Ralph, with a piety which seems quaintly out of place. The Widow finally threw him over in favour of 'a lord'; and the rejected suitor joined his father at Claydon.

The country was in its full summer beauty; Sir Ralph, delighted to be at home again, and weary of the wiles of fashionable dames, might well turn his thoughts towards the little Perdita amongst the sheep-folds of East Claydon. He made some inquiries as to whether she would be Mr. Abell's sole heir; 'her father's brother,' Mun writes, 'is a very cunning littigious fellow, who meaneth to try for it; yet Sir Robert Wiseman, a civilian of the Commons, and uncle to the mother-in-law [stepmother] of the young Lady, was imployed towards the cutting off of the intayle, which was done accordingly by Sir Orlando Bridgeman.'

Squire Abell was High Sheriff that year, but the flutter of pride and excitement which had been felt in the household at East Claydon, when he rode off with much pomp and circumstance to Buckingham, was quickly changed to sorrow; he died suddenly while performing his duty at the Assizes. The sympathy evoked in the county by this sad event brought his family into notice, and the rustic maiden became known outside the village limits as the owner of the picturesque old Manor-house and of the comfortable estate that went with it.

Mr. Maurice Gryffyth had been Vicar of East Claydon for nearly forty years, and was then too old to be entrusted with any delicate negotiations; but Sir Ralph asked Mr. Butterfield to pay a visit of condolence on his account, and to put in a word as occasion served about a possible marriage-treaty. It was but five days after the High Sheriff's death that the Rector of Middle Claydon reported

to Sir Ralph. 'I found the gentlewoman under such a cloud of sorrow and reservedness, that I could not without some difficulty fasten any discourse upon her, being never alone yet alwaies as it were alone and silent. When I tooke my leave I gave her a brieft touch of what I desired to have spoken more at large, if my modesty and her reservedness could have contrived it, yet what I sayd I heard from one of her confidants, (for from herselfe I received so low and still an answer that I could not tell what to judge of it) she tooke very kindly. I have been twice there since . . . she professes much respect to you, and sayth after she hath advised with her friends and the young Woman's she will make a more satisfactory returne, but would not by any meanes the young woman should be spoken to till she had first broken it to her. She wants not suters and those of good quality . . . she wants not wit, though she may breeding, and for ought I can learne is resolved to marry where she thinks she may live happy, and if there be a likeing between the young folke it may be a Match. . . . Richard Abell hath been here and is gone again; he would feigne have gotten the young woman to live with him and rely on him, but she absolutely refuses . . . they are as shy of him as of a beare. There is with them now Doctor Sir Robert Wiseman, a grave discreet gent; and one Mr. Gale is sent for,' brother-in-law to William Abell.

Edmund was 'a-courting' in September, when Sir Ralph, with little consideration for the new Mary's hopes, invited the old Mary to Claydon; but Mrs. Sherard declined to complicate the situation. 'I here your son is towards a good fortewen,' she writes, 'I wish him all happiness, and by that account I have of her both for her fortewen and person, shee is very considorable, soe I hope ther will be noe Stope of it.'

Edmund writes to Dr. Hyde: 'I persist still in my sute to Mrs. Mary Abel, who tells me she will be much ruled by her uncle in law Gale, a proctor in Drs. Commons, to whom I presume you are no stranger; therefore I beseech you, if it

Aug. 15,

1661

Oct. 7,

1661

be in your power, so to season this Gale that he may not blow any unprosperous wind towards me touching this affaire, yet I beleive I shall cast so sure an anchor that my affaire will not wrecke should he endeavour it. You may assure him that my estate in reversion is 3,000*l.* a yeare (my Father's debt only excepted, which you need not take notice off) so that my fortune is answerable to hers. Then we are the most convenient matches in England one to the other, because the best part of our estates joyne.'

Nov 15,
1661

Sir Ralph asked Mr. Butterfield to talk over matters again with Mrs Abell; he was not desirous that Mary should make too generous a settlement on her stepmother, while he felt all the delicacy of interfering. The Rector writes 'Sir, I have beene all this day from 11 of the clocke to foure this afternoone, at East Claydon, where I found them wondrous kinde and free both in their discourse and entertainment. . . . They do so openly and with so much affection own the Match with Mr Verney, that except it were really done, I do not see how they could doe more. Stephen Choke sayes Mr Verney will have as good a dispositiond gentlewoman as can be. Mrs Goffe sayes they want Mr. Verney extremely, especially one of them. Mrs Wiseman sayes she is resolved to marry him. I told them you had been like to have been robbed going up. The young woman coloured at it and seemed to be much concerned for it, and expressed a great deal of satisfaction for your escape. I told it on purpose, how true I know not, but had the relation from Will Lea. She weares the ring Mr. Verney gave her openly, and both speakes of him with much pleasingnes, and seemes to delight to heare of him. Truly, Sir, my thought there appeared in all they did and sayd, such innocent and hearty intentions as to the busines desired, that I could not in discretion presse any thing more than what easily dropt from them.' 'I received yours last Sunday dinner,' he writes the next day, 'and after evening service I carryed the inclosed from Mr. Gale to his Niece. She went up into her chamber to read it, and after a while came downe. I perceived by them they expected a letter from Mr. Verney. When she was sate I

Nov. 16,
1661.

asked her if there was any rub in the busines. She sayd no, but that her uncle had sent for a petticular, which she wondered att, and the mother sayd she had told you the truth of the estate, and she thought you knew it as well as they themselves. I told them that Mr. Gale over-valued her estate and undervalued his. Mrs. Abell replied she had heard him undervalue your estate, but she thought he had known theires better. Then the young woman sayd

. she was confident her rents would hold at Claydon, so upon that we had some discourse in reference to yours, which they heard were high. But I satisfied them that all your old inclosure was old rents; and for the new it was so upon improvement, that if it were hard rented now, in seven yeares it would be good.'

Mr. Butterfield said much about 'Mr. Verney's frugality' and that it would be 'no inconvenience to have such a father in law. . . . Night came on, and we parted faire.'

The negotiations were complicated and tedious; not only were Mary's relations anxious to make the best bargain they could for the orphan heiress, but Edmund, behind Sir Ralph's back, was urging Mr. Gale to stand out in Mary's name for a larger present maintenance than his father was disposed to allow him. He begs Mr. Gale to answer his letters privately 'within a cover directed to my Mistress.' Dr. Thomas Hyde is now alluded to as 'my deare deceased friende.'

'I play God you may deserve all,' writes the Rector to Mun. 'I have promised very faire for you. Should you not make my words good, I should not hereafter see her face without shame and sorrow. . . . I am sure I left her in a very good mode. I am, Sir, your officious friend and servant.'

While Mun's courtship stumbles at the settlements, there is another maiden who feels herself worse used than Mary Abell, a backward suitor being preferable in her opinion to none at all. Betty Verney, who, 'wherever she hath been, hath never yet been pleased,' was in 1660 'destitute of a habitation.' John Stowleley has 'said so much,' that Cary with 'her train of babs' can no longer offer her a home. Betty is deeply in debt, 'beggary in clothes,' 'physick keeps

Jan. 17,
1662

her very bare,' and she is exposed to 'all the miseries that attend poverty and quality in conjunction.' Sir Ralph sends her to a Mrs. Henderson at Goring, who with her husband keeps—like Mrs. Barbauld—a school for young gentlemen, 'noe ill shelter,' Sir Ralph considers, 'till another can be found.' Betty allows that 'the Dr. and his Wife received her veri kiendley,' 'but I am confident,' she writes, 'if you ware heare, you would not thinck this plas as fit for me as I thinck you doo, how ever I shal indever to stay tel it plesies God and you to reles me out of it.' Her real grievance was that her brother had failed to provide her with a husband. Her godmother, Mrs. Isham, in her hazy good nature, feels sure that 'a Mr. Blagrove,' whose family commands the Parliamentary seat at Reading, would be quite ready to marry her, but as he had wedded a Miss Brown 'a month since,' unknown to his elder brother, it was only dear Aunt Isham's sanguine temper that found an opening here. As Betty puts it to Sir Ralph—'I thinck my marrying veri unlickley in any plas, and imposibil in this . . . but I desier to be holey ruled by you.'

April 19,
1662.

She had set her heart on living with her brother in London, but he cannot take in a maid, and she cannot 'Dresse her Head' herself. Sir Ralph, regardless of the fact that his own wigs required very skilled attendance, makes light of difficulties with which he has never had to grapple. 'I am sori you thinck that to be so esei, which I find so hard,' writes the aggrieved damsel. 'At London, as you order matters,' he replies, 'there's noe hopes of paying your debts. . . . London is a Theife will trick your purse as well as mine.' To this Betty 'ackknoliges' that she has not a word to say. Three months later her hair still remains intractable. 'As for the dresiong my head myselfe, I must deale injenoiosley with you; I can not yet doo it; I am confident goeing to plow would not mack me mor sick than the reaching up of my armes does.'

Mrs. Henderson resolves at the end of May 'to tack no more borders,' 'the Dr. sais he will live with onley his privat famley,' so they request Betty to dispose of herself by Mid-

summer. 'The dressing of your head puts off severall persons from entertaining you,' says Sir Ralph. 'Write me word the utmost you can give and what attendance you doe expect for soc much money.' Betty can afford but '30℥ A yere for all things, besides firing and woshing,' she 'must goe very menely' and doubts she 'will not hould out at that nether', but she has heard 'from A gentleil woman of my acquioutans to let me know if I pleased I mit live at hur ffathers, and she and I should be chamber feloes, herr name is Frances Bolton, and she lives in Broad Street at the eind towards Thrednedle Street.' Lady Hobart recommends the Charter House, where Lady Lovet and many others are, 'she may be drest and have a roome to herselfe for 30℥ a yere.' The arrangement with the 'gentleil woman' is, however, preferred.

The poor little heiress at East Claydon is still writing sadly to her uncle in Sermon Lane about the 'tedious and odious delayes' in the marriage settlement, when Mr. Butterfield gives Edmund a pretty account of his visit to the old Manor-house. 'I found Mrs. Mary in her morning Feb. 24,
1662. dresse, a white and blacke petty Cloate and wast coate, and all cleane and fine linnen, so lovely proper and briske, I protest I knew her not at first sight. . . . They made themselves merry at Valentine's day in drawing Valentines, and very unwilling she was to be brought to draw (6 or 7 papires being put together rolled up) for feare she should not draw you. But being perswaded to it at last she ventured, and they say very fairely happened on you to her great satisfaction . . . I cannot but adde, had I gained her, as you have done, I would marry her, if she would have mee, though I beg'd; and thinke to see more happy dayes in such a choyce, than in another with thousands per an.' Edmund wrote warmly enough though not often. 'My dearest Mistrisse, If I had no other errant yet I ought to go a Pilgrim on foote to East Claydon, only to kissee that deare and pleasant hand, which so lovingly writ her self, most affectionatly faythfull till death unto me her slave, who must shortly make a journey of devotion to my saint there,

May 1,
1662

even to my most passionately beloved Mistrisse Mary Abell &c. &c. . . ' Again, ' Yesterday I returned from Gravesend, where I parted with my poore brother, who is gone for Aleppo, and desired me to present his humble service unto you, wishing both you and me all happinesse in the enjoyment of each other whereat I say Amen. . . . Madam I hope all may be agreed twixt Mr. Gaell and my father before my going downe to wayte upon you, and conduct you hither, which I am resolved shall bee next weeke at farthest ' This visit to London gave Mary something definite to talk about when her mother and aunt complained of Mun's neglect. She could not but feel that it was not thus that other maidens were wooed and won. Squire Duncombe's courting of ' Joseph Busbye's daughter had greatly pleased ' the elder ladies. *He* could not bear to be parted from his mistress for an hour; her family must be ever at his house, or he at theirs; he had been the last week at Addington; ' always drunk,' alas, ' but if he could have had a priest, they say, he would needs have been married at midnight, in spite of all his friends, and away he is gone home with her again.' It was certainly disappointing to hear ten days later, that ' Squire Duncombe was quite off of his hot matching, and would venture her being sicke for love of him ' ; but need true love be as cool and reasonable as Edmund's was?

Mr. Butterfield was confounded. All his previous experience had been of Edmund's hot-headed eagerness: no diligence and zeal on his own part could ever overtake the suitor's impatience. Night and day Mun was writing love-letters, which Mary Eure cared neither to read nor to answer. Mary Abell blushed with expectation, and grew pale with disappointment when the Rector's budget from Covent Garden contained no word for her. *Then* every member of the family had been tormented, and every conceivable influence set to work, to induce Mary Eure to grant Edmund an interview, *now* when the heart of Mary Abell had yielded almost before the siege was laid, he scarce took the trouble of coming to claim the gracious

welcome that awaited him 'She weares his picture openly and confidently,' writes the anxious Rector 'Mr Verney does very ill in my minde to breake his word thus with the ladies here at not coming down at the time prefixed, whose impatience in being thus kept from towne . . . is very manifest.' When the truant came at last, he scolded, argued, and explained, but failed to satisfy them. Mary herself was provoked out of her usual patient silence, and Edmund wrote in considerable irritation to Sir Ralph about his evening at the White House. It seemed doubtful whether the long-promised expedition would prove very enjoyable, but Edmund hired a coach and made what haste he could to 'carry his women' to town.

Mr. Butterfield writes to him: 'no saint but the Virgin Mary can make you happy, sure you take more state upon you then Majesty it selfe.' Small-pox is rife, and he trembles for his little friend 'in that ugly London this hot season.' 'Make hast downe into the country,' he writes, 'that is now very sweet . . . but be sure before you come join the two Claydons together or 'twill never be halfe so pleasant to you. My humble respects to your deare Lady, the maker or marrier of your wealth.'

A week later Mr. Butterfield's anxiety reached its climax. 'It was first the private whispers of some, but now 'tis Town and country talko,' he writes to Sir Ralph, 'that the match will not be; . . . I wish with my heart it had never been thus carryed on . . . 'Tis admirable to mee, that wise men should stand so peremptorily upon such inconsiderable niceties (for so they will seeme to plainer judgments) to the ruine of your credits and fortunes. . . . Why will you destroy your family, and render all the cost and paines you have been at in beautifying Claydon fruitles? . . . You may see my heart is full, but it runs over so strangely. I must have one fling at him too, and then I have done.'

Here follows the 'fling.' 'Mr. Verney, I cannot forbear writing. I had much adoe to forbear coming to you . . . Sir if your father and you had studyed to make yourselves the talko of the Country, the game and sport of those

that do not love you, and a grief to your friends, you could not have found out such another way . . . If you could be careles of your selfe, yet consider you have gained the affection of an honest gentlewoman, whom if you should wrong by an inconsiderate breach, you will never be able to answer it while you breath, and looke to it, never any prosper that are guilty of treachery in that kinde . . . Sir, I write this out of the bitterness of my heart, and out of an honest desire to be instrumentall to your good, not out of any busy humour to be meddling in other men's matters . . . I am concerned in your welfare more than ordinary, and it vexes my very soul to heare how the base bumpkins triumph in the disappointment of this long expected Match, because forsooth now East Claydon shall not be inclosed, though that be the lest of those things that trouble mee for you in this affaire. Sir, excuse my zeale for you, I hope 'tis needles, put mee out of doubt by a comfortable word or two, or els I shall dy with melancholy. My respects to your good lady.'

Happily Mr. Butterfield's fears had overshot the mark; while village gossips were still chuckling over the supposed scandal, the news reached Claydon that the marriage had taken place on the 1st of July, in Henry VII.'s chapel, Westminster. The presence of one relation was certainly dispensed with. Tom had been more than usually tragic, only desiring 'a sleepy potion' to put an end to life and its miseries; but he has now a more genteel grievance. 'I was not of an alliance neere enough to be invited to the marriage feast, yet I hope I shall be thought worthy to wear a brideall favour, not such as was bestowed on coachmen or lacqueys, but such an one as was bestowed on him whose equall I am in every respect. . . . This by the way for my discours is of another matter and of farr greater concernment to mee then a wedding favour.' We can easily supply the rest!

The young couple spent three or four weeks in London and seem to have been very happy together. Sir Ralph writes from Chancery Lane, 'My Lady Hobart will be at home all this day, and Sir Nathaniell desires to heare your

Trumpet [Mun has added another instrument to his lute and theorboe], either this evening between 6 and 7, or to-morrow . . . therefore endeavour to get your Master hether.' Edmund writes to Mr. Gale: 'Owning as well for my Deare Mall as for my selfe . . . the courtesies done to us by you before, as well as since our marriage . . . And truly my selfe and second selfe would wayte upon you, your sonne and daughter . . . but that our neighbours in Buckinghamshire would think and say we went only to avoyde them, if wee did not goe directly from hence to Claydon, a purpose to entertayne all that come to see us.'

July 16,
1662

To Sir Ralph he laments the expenses he must incur 'dans cette ville devorante.' Besides spending 13s for his wife's wadded cloak, he pays as much for her silk mantle; 'one pound for my pocket money, Wife 10 shillings; gloves 8 shillings and sixpence; and for coach hire these 2 dayes 10 shillings. For a Carman sent for and disappointed 6d. Paid at a play for 8 maides in the 18d. places, 12s. for their Extraordinaries 6d.' 'Mr. Verney's frugality' had never existed except in good Mr. Butterfield's brain, and this was not the moment to call it into existence; indeed the cost of marrying an heiress is feelingly alluded to in the literature of the period. 'When the Bills of Wooing, Wedding, and Honey-Year are defraid, the Baste I doubt proves more than the Roast.'

July 21,
1662.

But all else went well, the widow had become 'my Mother' in Edmund's letters, and 'Sister Abell' in Sir Ralph's; great preparations were going on at Claydon to welcome the bride and to introduce her handsomely to the whole Verney connection. The widower-host's establishment was in the greatest commotion, no expense was to be spared to do them honour. Lucc Sheppard looked out the best markets in town for fish and foreign fruits. Sir Ralph's extravagance in this respect had often been the subject of expostulations from the Doctor; 'You are a noble gent. but a simple fellow, and doe not consider that 6d. a peece for lemons and Nobbs Brocadge doe not agree, and will not hold out, eat your sawce with veniger and lett lemons

Sept. 10,
1662.

alone.' Luce had, however, succeeded in getting 'a dosin of lemonds att an exelent cheap rate . . . they cost but 3 shillings the dosen beside portage unwasht, if there be any truth in man, and lickly to be Deaier. Orengees are the worst at 12 pence apeece.' 'The sturgeon promiset h faire . . . in caes it want pickell, 'tis to be covered with beare viniger, the lowest price that the fishmonger alowed the kegg for was 15s. . . . the oysters att 2s.' The cellar was stocked with Rhenish wine, claret, and canary. The new housekeeper had to provide an impossible number of beds, the coach and horses were needed in opposite directions at once 'Company I beleave you want not,' wrote Sister Pegg, 'how you will lodg all I cannot imaien.' Sir Ralph writes that Sister Pen must positively defer her arrival, till 'Sir Nathaniel Hobart returnes to London (which will bee very suddenly), for now my sister Gardner takes upp the Parlour chamber, Sister Elmes the Orenge, Coz Leeke the Lying-in chamber, and Sir Nath. Hobart and his Lady are to Have the old Drawing Roomme; and the truth is I expect both Sir Thomas Bird and Sir Roger Burgoyne and his brother every day, and then they must lodg in the Gallery chamber, and I beleave my Cozen Mun Hobart will bee heere on Satterday next, soe that I am forced to set upp a Bed for my Aunt Isham in the little drawing roomme. . . . I have neither Roomme, nor bedding left for any body, noe not for a servant, though I have already Borrowed, and must get Sister Elmes and coz. Leeke to lodg together, and made all other shifts that possibly I can. Neither can I send my coach on Tuesday to Alisbury, for that very day I am engaged to meete the deputy Leiftenants of this quarter at a Muster at Buckingham, and after that at Stoney Stratford . . . wherefore I must needes intreate you to deferre your journey hether.' Penelope had her own reasons for leaving home immediately. 'If weeping in my Lodgings and in the Street by day and by night, would break my heart, in earnest it ware happy for me . . . Mr. Denton has bin so outrageous with me, that he has run after me with his Knif in his hand, and vowed to Stob me; God mak me thankfull

Sept. 15,
1662.

I clapt a dore upon me, and my maide turn'd the Keye, so there I remained in the roome till his great fury was over.

. He did tell me that he should never be at rest till he had washed his hands in my blood.' 'Good Brother,' she continues, 'if your Letter had com time enough to my hands befor that I was in the coach, it had put a stop to my Journey, for God knows my hart. I intended you no trouble, but did belive that I might croud in among the reast of the companey.' Her husband joined her later, but at Claydon he was always on his best behaviour. An elaborate practical joke was devised against him by the wedding party. A letter reached him purporting to come from Gape, the apothecary, of which a copy is labelled, lest posterity should misread it, 'A Sham Letter to John Denton that is Crackt.'

'Good Squire, I am given to understand by some friends at Court, that your Mother is labouring with all the power and might shee can, to make your youngest brother William a Lord, and hath soe farre prevaild that shee hath gott a promise of it from his Majesty, which my Lady Studdall, your kinswoman, understandinge and being much concerned in the injury don to you thereby, hath prevailed soe farre by the interest she hath at Court as to put a stoppe to it, and if you will part with 500*l*. you shall have the honour your selfe and not your brother. Now truly if you will take my opinion, I would have you to doe it, for when your brother shalbee sensible of the disgrace that will here by bee put upon him, undoubtably hee will hang himselfe, and when your Mother knowes that, then shee will presently bee mad, and soe you being Eldest sonne the Law will cast the Estate upon you, and then you may begge her for a Lunaticke, and have the keeping of her your selfe, and soe may bee revenged of all the injuryes shee hath don you. Indeepe you are mightily beholding to my Lady Studdall, for shee hath not onely spoke to the King for you, but to both the Queenes, the Duke of Yorke and the Dutchesse, and there is not a Lord of the privie Councell but shee hath made them your freinds. The King is much taken with the Comendations that my Lady Studdall hath given of you, and hath

comanded that you waite upon him as soone as you come to London. And it is generally belived that you wilbee one of the Lords of the privie Councell, and that will bring you in a Thousand pounds a yeare of it selfe, besides if you can by your wisdome be but as great a favourite as my Lord Chancellor is, you are made for ever. And I hope when you are in power you will not forgett your freinds, etc., etc. You see what hast you neede make to London . . . I have sent the messinger on purpose and therefore I pray you pay him ' Of the 'jest's prosperity' we hear nothing. The good apothecary himself has been 'choused by Sir Wm. Berkeley,' who has given him the shp and embarked for Virginia, in Gape's debt.

Another merry letter was concocted by Aunt Isham and signed by the ladies to induce their host to join them at a picnic. 'Sir, you beinge one of his Magistes Debity Leve teunants, you may be pleased to take noties that too morroe aboute 10 a cloke there is a meetinge att Jhon Rose's House neere Runts Woods. The desine is too devower all as comes before them, as Egges, Baken and ale. For the sagane [sacking?] of your woode itt is thought fite as you a Peare in your Passone for who knowes whate these Extravant Pople may doe in thare Ale, whone thay be hie-flone. so you are too sett all other consarnements a side too doe you utmost endevore to keepe in good order the Passons which intend too asemble them togeather.'

Betty Verney was not included in the wedding party, and got up 'a stolen matching' of her own, on purpose, so the sisters assured him, to revenge herself upon Sir Ralph. In October she had pronounced her health to be such that she was not long for this world—the next news is from Mun. 'Il est bruitté que ma Tante Isabeau a dessein de se perdre sur un pauvre curé: car jo vis ces mots deshonorables escrits par Madame Tipping à ma Tante Isham.' There is a chorus of indignation in the family, and Peg Elmes writes in great wrath to Sir Ralph, 'I assure you, you are not a loune in the sensur of my sister Betty's casting a way of herselfe, for now they bringe me very deepely in too . . .

Nov. 1,
1662.

Nov 20,
1662.

Sometimes I am a weary of hearing it, how she was cast of, and forsaken, and left to herself, noe countenance shewd her, nor care taken of her, but sent to a parson's house, to a scoole, like a babie. But as I heare the buesines, this might a fallen out any wheare, for the man as I am tolde, lived not theare, but by acident preached in that church, and theare fell in love with her, which for allt I know, him or sich a nother might a dun heare, if she wolde be soe simple to harken to sich a thinge. Now all are for your getting of him a liveing, which sum say you may doe of Sir Richard Piggot, and that is Grendon Parsonage, and your one whenever Mr. Butterfield dies. Soe now you are put in mind of it time enufgh.' Old Aunt Ursula, who never lost an opportunity of reflecting on Sir Ralph, loudly declared that though Betty was a fool the blame was his.

Cary considers that Betty's 'high discontents was the caus of this rash ackt of casting herselfe away, nether is shee somuch to bee condemned as many others. Lett us remenber the Earl of Linsis's sister who married Dr. Hunt, which was bot a chapling and was as destitut of preferment when her marriage was knone, as this man is, and Sir William Russels dauhtar, and to goe newor homb, my cossin Townsend. And 2 of these had grat fortunes, and the third enough to subsist--sartinly did upon them—and yet none of thies utterly cast of by ther frinds, the rather sopported, and her case much more excusabill then theirs; for we have often red of men as have past for wise and pious both, yet the feare of want hath so far trans ported them, that they have lade A side not only reson bot religion and destroyed themselves, and I have often heard her say, that was her fear, whenever you failed, and truly souch throwts cause soul-sicknes.'

This impetuous bride of nine-and-twenty gave her relations no chance 'to come up for her wedding'; indeed Peg had previously informed Sir Ralph how on the first ruinour of the 'maridg' she had sought her sister for four hours in the City, 'and atl the last mett with one as I knew she went out of her lodgen with, which in my disscourse

Nov. 21,
1862.

with him, I fowned to fallter much in ansering the questions I put to him but att the last I throttned high if he did not bringe her out, or let me know wheare she was, I wolde come with that as should make him doe it, to them of higher power.' After these ambiguous threats had been launched at the head of the young bridegroom, he hastily retreated, undertaking that Betty should call on her sister that afternoon, 'accordingly she came although too late, for she maryed the Thursday after she came to town' There is a letter from Betty full of abject apologies 'for this great folt of mine which I should bee willing to Ack Knolig upon my knees ware I in presans too doo it,' but her new signature writ large at the bottom of the page reminds her brother that the great fault can never be undone, and she plucks up spirit enough to assert that 'I am not so much lost, as sum thinck I am, beecos I have maried one, as has the reput of an oneist man, and one, as in time I may live comfortably with.'

Even such a modest amount of domestic happiness seemed far out of reach, though Mr. Adams had one or two narrow escapes; 'I was within 24 hours of a parsonage in Cheshire for your new Brother, of £120 per annum, but it is gone,' writes Dr. Denton; 'we must look about us for some perferment for him.' The broad, kindly, and wholly commonplace face of Charles Adams looks out of its black frame at Claydon, without a redeeming feature to suggest the romantic instinct that prompted his runaway marriage at the age of 24. He became 'Clerk of great Baddow in Essex,' and a highly respected member of the family circle, but meanwhile it was a standing joke with the sisters when they wished to torment their busy elder brother, that they would call upon him in the morning, and talk about Betty!

And so while poor Adam and Eve without a garden, as Dr. Denton called them, met with nothing but reproaches and hard fare, Edmund and Mary were being feasted and honoured at Claydon. Good Mr. Butterfield saw the country damsel he had so gallantly championed the central figure of the family rejoicings; the square pew so long abandoned to moths and

spiders was filled to overflowing; the Rector himself, in the glory of a new surplice for which Sir Ralph had supplied 'the cloth,' beamed down upon them all with unmixed



INTERIOR OF MIDDLE CLAYDON CHURCH

(From a sketch by F. P. Laidl Verney)

satisfaction. Dame Margaret and Dame Mary from their niches in the chancel looked kindly upon the girl who was to carry on their work at Claydon, and take the woman's place in the empty house. A few weeks of the intimacy and

confidence of married life had changed her careless lover into a devoted husband, and after enjoying Sir Ralph's hospitality and the festivities that fashion prescribed, the Edmund Verneys were to make their home in the old Manor-house at East Claydon where Mary Abell had spent her childhood. But the assembled aunts and cousins, who warmly applauded Edmund's assiduous attentions to his young wife, were provoked to find that she was at times moody, capricious, jealous, or unreasonably depressed. Whence came this strange shadow, which seemed to alter Mary's whole character, and threatened to darken her life just as a happy and useful career was opening before her ?

CHAPTER XLIV.

IN CHANCERY LANE.

1662 1665.

SIR NATHANIEL and Lady Hobart, the 'Sweet Nat' and 'Sweet Nan' of Sir Ralph's early days, were still, in middle life, the truest of friends and the most delightful of correspondents. Anne Hobart, with as warm and constant a heart as her sister, Doll Leeke, was more a woman of the world, a very capable housewife, and a great lover and grower of flowers. In 1652 Sir Nathaniel was made a Master in Chancery 'in Sir Ed. Leech his dead place,' and in 1658 the family removed from Highgate, that he might live near the law courts. Lady Hobart gave as her address 'A greate house in Chancery Lane, over aguinist Lincoln's Inne, near the Three Cranes, next dor to the Hole in the Wall, within two dors of Mr. Farmer's and one dor of Judge Ackings.' The house was further distinguished as being 'nigh to the Pumpe' and as having 'a very handsom garden with a wash hous in it.' The rent, 55*l.* a year, was considered a heavy one, and as there were more rooms than they required, Anne Hobart set her wits to work to reduce expenses, by letting part of the house to relations during the London season. Her first experiment of taking in her married daughter, Lady Smith, was not a success, and her next overtures were made to Sir Ralph, who since his return to England in 1658 had kept a *pied à terre* in Covent Garden or in Russell Street.

Sir Ralph liked the idea, but other relations, who were accustomed to lodge near him, made indignant protests against his removal to so remote a quarter. 'Uncle Dr.

and self mander most greivously att it,' writes Peg Elmes; 'I wish it a thousand unconveanyantis to you, & them moare as temted you to it.' On the other hand, Lady Hobart, with her hospitable anxieties, was not always easy to satisfy. 'You were not kind to me,' she writes one evening that Sir Ralph had dined out, when she had been 'busy all the morning buying a banquet, and in the afternoon at my Lady Bartley's to teeh her to do paist, wich are all at your sarvis . . . but you not coming I intend to send my swetmeets into Iarland.' But on the whole Sir Ralph was free to come and go as he liked, and the evenings spent with Sir Nathaniel were most congenial to him.

The winter of 1662-3 found Sir Ralph with Edmund and Mary Verney settled in their own suite of rooms in Chancery Lane, to Lady Hobart's intense satisfaction. Her daughters 'Frank' and Nancy, whose strong wills sometimes brought them into sharp collision with their mother, were fond of cousin Mun, and gave his bride a kind welcome.

March 26,
1663. Mary Verney's health and spirits had been variable; when she first arrived she was popular with them all, but she became subject to fits of moody silence or of hysterical excitement during which she was a torment to herself and others. She vexed her husband with unreasonable suspicions and grievances, or, as Dr. Denton expresses it, 'Zelotipia [jealousy] is gott into her pelicranium, & I doe not know what will gett it out.' So disturbing an element in the house completely destroyed Sir Ralph's comfort, he suddenly left for Claydon and 'frightened them with his sad looks when he went away.'

March 25,
1663. Lady Hobart was constantly urging him to return. 'Dear Sir Ralph, to tell you how much we want you a nights, is not to be put in this paper, but hasen up, & you shall see how much you shall be mayd on. Your por son will be a very misarabell man in his wif I fear; be sure you chuse a beter, but one you must have. To be serus, I am greved at hart, & though I have many trobells, yet 'tis as much to me as any of my on. If sorow or tears cold cuer hur she wold, for it has put a genarall sadnes in us all,



Cornelius Jansen, pinx

ANNE, LADY HOBART, DAUGHTER OF SIR JOHN LEGGE

11

& we wish you hear, but it can not but be a sad sight to you.'

Dr. Denton reports that Mary is 'much worse, laughs more then before, speakes more boldly, descants uppon by standers, myselfe, Dr. Ent (for whom we sent), Sir Nat: Hob:, Sr Wm. Smyth, & few escape her. She is now averse from all phisick & bleedinge, soe that I doubt we shall have much to doe with her. If she will in any measure be ruled, I hope to get her out of this, but I shall be ever fearfull of returns. . . . Though her illnes be out April 9, 1663. of the usuall Road of other distractions, yet I doe not like it the worse, but doe believe she is very capable of Cure.'

Sir Ralph thinks that 'all the Phisick in the World will not cure hei, unlesse she strive against her Malancholly, & in a good measure proove her owne Doctor.' He forwards 'a couple of Rent Capons the miller sent my Daughter March 23, 1663. with two Dozen Puddings for Lady Hobart & another two Dozen for Mary's Breakfast,' but he declines to return. Aunt Isham keeps Sir Ralph's room aired. 'Now Mis Hubbord and I have a Little more pleasure in your Bead than we had att the first,' she writes; 'itt was so soft as itt had all most kiled us. So now we have gotte a quilte & Lie very well. But we wante your good company.'

Edmund had small chance of getting his affairs into order with such distracting anxieties and expenses, and he was often trying to economise in the wrong place. He had not a horse to ride, and his father, who 'is overstocked with Jades, having 17 at grass & 8 more at the house,' will not lend him any, 'because you ought to keep your own, the country wonders how you can bee without them, & censures you very much for it.' He begs his father to be at the Manor Court which the steward holds in his absence at East Claydon: 'Tout iroit mieux, car vostre presence abbattroit leur insolence, & cause de la veneration qu'ils vous doivent.'

Mr. Butterfield rates Mun vigorously for his management of his wife's land: 'I hate this rack-renting 'tis worse than usury . . . my own small rents come in roundly without any calling for.' He fears Mun will soon have all his land

Feb. 1,
1663.

thrown on his hands, 'for none will ever come to your termes but some ale-house chap-men that never mean to pay. 'Tis not for the profit of the landlord to have to do with such customers, out of whose fingers 'tis more difficult to get pents, then to do all one's other busines. 'Tis a poore trade to be alwayes proffering one's commodities either to such as we know will not buy, or will not pay.' The White House was still in Mrs. Abell's hands, and there was a long but friendly bargaining over the terms on which Edmund should take possession of it.

Mary Verney's health improved in the summer; she and her husband stayed with Sir Ralph at Claydon House, went with him and Lady Elmes to visit 'Lady Vere Gawdy': and then on to the Warners,¹ rich relations of Mary's, living at Milner in the same neighbourhood. Lady Hobart is curious to know from Sir Ralph 'how you did like your tret. I hear it was much beyond Croshall, I desier the relason from cosen Elmes.'

Oct. 3,
1663.

There are 'large expressions' of regret from all the company at Croweshall at their departure, to the which Sir Ralph desires to make a suitable return, but he writes to Doll Leeke, from Milner at 11 o'clock at night: 'Though you love a long letter, you know I love a short, & I am sure you are ever best pleased with what is most agreeable to the Lazy Humour of, Deare Cozen, your sleepy Dull, yet most affectionate humble servant.' To Lady Gawdy he writes, 'I thanke you hartily over and over againe; 'tis the King's own way of Rhetoricke when hee receives the greatest Boones, soe that I hope it may be allowed to bee courtly & in Fashion.' Dr. Denton hopes that Mary 'is welcome home, & that she hath left Mrs. Zelotipia behind.'

Nov. 11,
1663.

Edmund writes to Lady Hobart: 'Madam, my thankes to you for receiving my family last winter, must at this time bee Ushers to desire the same favour of your Ladyship, if it may sute with your occasions, for I esteeme it not the least of my happinesse to live among such good company; to the end I may be as little trouble as possible, I doo

¹ Mrs. Warner was Mr. Gale's daughter.

intend, if you thinke fitt, to bringe up Besse a purpose to cleanse my chamber, & to doe all other necessary work, so that I shall be one more in number now then I was before.' He will wait on her 'about the latter end of the Terme, & stay till a little after Christmasse.'

Undeteired by former experiences, Lady Hobart was happy in her hospitable preparations. Sir Ralph's quarters must be quite to his liking. 'I have whited the room, & stairs hed, & clened the bed and hangings. Pray send me word whether the chamber shall be pained at the full bignes or no. If it be, it will be Lighcter at the chimney, but then your beech box must stand in one of the closets. The dor must goo in by your man's beds fet. Now fur the stabels, i have my chos of 2, one in Magpy Yard. Thar is a pond in the yard to wash the horses and very good water. It will hold four horsis, and the hay loft will hold 4 lod of hay, ther is bus for ots. Thay say they ar very honist and sivell people; judg Ackings coach has stod thar this 14 year. Now thar is another at the Red Harp in Peter Lan; tis one turning mor beyond the Magpy, but it has the same convenency. The Magpy is 16 pound a year, if thay Log a man; the other i can have for 14 pound.' A little later she has 'paynted all the windows and mayd all clen. You may come when you will, but you sayd you will Ly on a quilt, thar fer I must beg you to bring on, for i have non. I have mayd all my hous beter than it was for clenness, but i am very wrought in my stomack. Pray send me som grens to set agans my new wall & som Jeseney & hunicuckells.'

Oct 16,
1668

For Edinund and his wife she has prepared the 'gret chamber. I now want a bed; if it be not to much trobell to you to send up som curtains & valanc, for at presant I want som. If it be your wrought ons, or any other, it will be much mor covenant for them, & thay shall hav the Low rom at thar sarvis to set in, & to bring all compeny in to, for we did want that very much Last year. Hur mayds shall have a very good Login to thar selfs whar hur truncks shall stand. . . . Pray tell Bes King she must Leve tiling storys; my mayds dred

hur, thay Live quietly senc she went. But for what she sayd to me, I forgive hur, & wold have her com to dow thar worck; it will be very convenant for me. She may wash all thar clos hear. Say nothing to hur master, & pray Let them bring up 2 par of shets for thar on bed I will have on hundred of fagets Layd into your wod hous redy aganst you com. My mayd shall Ly in all the beds, & all shall be well ared.'

Mrs. Abell hopes her dear Mary may 'injoy the pleasures of the towne, which God be blessed, you have all the reasone in the world soe to doe I am troubled with that illness at my hart that I was when you left me. I have often wished my selfe with you since you went from hence, that I might in some part partake of your pleasure, but that is a thing that I have bine weaned from a long time, & the onely comfort that I have now left me is your Deere selfe. I have soe great a tye & obly-gation upon me for my Dearest of frinds sake, as allsoe for your owne sweet deportment allways towards me, that it hath for ever obliged mee.' But these lovable qualities were again to be sadly overclouded. The noise and bustle of town life probably affected poor Mary's nerves, and she had not been long in Chancery Lane before the distressing symptoms returned with increased violence.

The relations had hoped much for Sir Ralph from Edmund's marriage. His extreme kindness to all the younger ladies of the family, and the pleasure he took in their society, promised great happiness to a daughter-in-law. He had given his son's bride the kindest welcome. We know that he was not exacting as to the amount of book-learning to be demanded of a woman, but he was fastidiously alive to any lack of politeness and good breeding, and, no lady could be permitted to do the honours of his house who did not come up to his fine standard of taste and courtesy. Such were the traditions left by his mother and his wife; it was their want of refinement that made the society of some of his sisters so trying to him. Mary Abell, though homely and unformed, had the gentle voice and manner belonging to

an unaffectedly sweet and modest nature, and she was young enough to learn all Sir Ralph's example could have taught her, had not her unhappy malady completely estranged him from her.

The degree of moral responsibility attaching to actions on the borderland of sanity was a problem far beyond the medical science of the day; and Sir Ralph took a severe view of Mary's want of self-control. As she grew worse, the slovenliness of her person and attire, and the indecorum of her conduct, aroused in him nothing but disgust; her screams, and her still more terrible laughter, so irritated his nerves, that his only wish was to fly from any house in which she might be. All Lady Hobart's plans for him were overthrown; the old opinion once more prevailed, that he would be driven to marry again, and that his choice was likely to be Vere, Lady Gawdy. Another version of the rumour reached that lady, and she hastens to congratulate him: 'I heare you are not farr from inoyinge A Considerable pleasur, if our sex might procure it you; if it bee so, may all that renders women les worthy then Men bee exempt from the Parson you shall make happie.'

He let them talk, and left town for Claydon in January, 1664. making the journey in one day. Lady Hobart entreats him while he is alone to go to bed betimes; 'i mack my Nat dew so . . . all here want you espeshally Nancy,' whose wild manners had 'gron sivell' in Sir Ralph's company. 'We have a bad day or tew with my swet she cosen Vainey. She has the mesells, & I fear in gret danger . . . your son Lis in a palet in hur chamber. I must tell you, if she war the quen she cold not be beter locked to. I wold not for the world have hur dy in my hous, but god's will must be don. She has asked her hushan pardon, & is sory for what she has don, & has promased to be a new woman if she live.'

The best side of Mun's nature was brought out by his wife's sad condition, much as she had tried his patience; the terrible symptoms which so repelled Sir Ralph only made Edmund more constant and pitiful in his attendance

upon her. He sent frequent reports of her health to Claydon.

Feb 1,
1664.

'Mon très cher pere,—J'ai beaucoup a vous escrire touchant plusieurs choses, mais je ne puis rien dire, je suis tellement affligé a cause du tres grand danger dans lequel ma pauvre femme gist à present, elle a les Rougeoles dont le danger je crois est passé, mais elle a une fièvre continue, qui me perce le coeur, par manque de repos n'ayant point dormi il y a environ cinq nuits. . . . Dieu a soigné des petits aussi bien que des grands, & pour moi je mets tout mon espoir en lui seul, & je le supplie avec toute soumission imaginable qu'il daigne redonner la pleine santé à ma chère et vertueuse femme.'

The household in Chancery Lane is struck by the sensibility he displays; his father is afraid of his being too constantly with his sick wife, and begs that he will walk out in the garden; while Mr. Butterfield acknowledges 'though I were heartily sorry for the cause of your sorrow, yet it pleased mee to heare how passionately you tooke it, & I hope this demonstration of your affection, will take off all occasion of future jealousies.'

March 3,
1664.

In a few days Sir Ralph was back in town; poor Mary, having recovered from the measles, fell much more seriously ill with small-pox. Doll Leeke's solicitude on her behalf was tempered with dread of the infection for lives still more precious to her. She is anxious that Sir Ralph should not go into the sick chamber. Mary happily recovered 'without any inconveniency to her complexion.' Mrs. Abell gives some motherly advice: 'There is now noe thing more remains to make yourselfe hapy in this world, then to have a cheerfull hart, & a good opinion of your selfe.' Nothing was more completely out of Mary's reach than a cheerful heart, but she seemed fairly well, and by the advice of the whole family Edmund went to Claydon with his father, for rest and change, after his arduous nursing. Lady Hobart, Frank and Nancy offered with unselfish courage to take charge of his wife.

The state of public affairs made Sir Ralph and Dr. Denton

very anxious. A subservient House of Commons was ready to surrender the chief safeguard which the Long Parliament had provided against the King governing without calling a Parliament. It was in accordance with the best traditions of the county that the member for Buckingham should throw himself into the breach, risking the loss of the Court favour which he had been thought to value only too highly. 'The debate on tuesday was about the Triennial Bill,' writes Dr. Denton, 'for the Damninge of which Prynne spake most desperately & St Richard] T[emple] as desperately to preserve it, . . . but all in vaine, the Bill is ingrossed, marchtupp to the Lords & soe farewell Magna Charta.' Sir Nathaniel Hobart is not of Dr. Denton's opinion; he thinks that Mr. Solicitor in defending the new Bill 'had both right & rhetorick of his side.' The Lords passed it 'without any alteration, tho' there wanted not Critticks who quarreld both with the form & the words, but the wiser Lords thought it not safe to returne it to the Commons with any amendment for fear of Mr. Vaughan & Sir Rich. Temple.' 'Vaughan is lookt upon as malcontent'; he 'would have raised a filthy dust' had he reached town sooner.

March 25,
1661.

March 31,
1661

April 1,
1661

March 20,
1661.

The news of Mary does not improve. 'We have had a sad day with your dafter,' writes Lady Hobart. 'She now hats us all but thar to mayds, & this day she has bin kind to franck wich dos ples me much, for she must not be out with all at once. I have no mor to say but Love your self, & mack much of honis Sir Raphe, for when he is gon, his frinds will not find shuch another. I am suer por me shant, thar for Lové hur that is Sir your sarvant to command A. Hobart.' 'Tusday our cosen was very ill all day, and hyly discontented. At night thay had no way but to give hur a sleping pill, & she slep all night & till ten in this morning, & wacked very tame but sulen. We had much adow to get hur to eat a bet, but with much in trefy at Last she did eat a leg of a rabbit, & had a mind to goo a brod & i did goo with hur as fur as Kensington, & as we cam back she wold goo in to the park, & if she will she must and did, & was very well but sayd very letill, but as we cam hom she wished she had

March 23,
1661.

never com to London, but stayd with dear mother, for nobody dos love hur but she and por Jan. And tould the gearls & me she mought have lived if she had had som about hur, & raled on us all, & begon to gro very bad. So at last I did persuad hur to wright to hur hus to let hur Live with hur mother. So she is now a writing in gret wroth. She says he shall hear a pes of hur mind. Bats [Dr. Bates] is out of town,' but Dr. Denton at night ' gave her dainty ease, & soe she continued all Wenesday, & marcht abroad.'

March 29,
1664.

Edmund writes from Claydon: 'My Deare wife,—It was no small joy to mee the reading your lines, and the hearing of your riding fourth, whereby I take it for granted that you are not so ill as you would seem to be—this good newes came to me by my man after my returne from Northampton Fayre, where I have bought you three gallant bay coache horses, for to carry you abroad a ayding after your tedious sicknesse, therefore pray thee to be of a couragious & cheerefull spirit and chase away all those timerous & melancholy thoughts which make thee conceit thy selfe in more danger than really thou art: my deare soule if thou hast any kindnesse for me be ruled by me & the rest of thy freinds, who are with thee, and do not think thy selfe more knowing then all of us, but thinke thy husband adviseth thee best, when he desireth thee to banish all despayring fancies, & to submitt unto our great Makers pleasure, be it in life or death or any affliction whatsoever, & that not only without repining but also with cheerfulness: and as touching my particular part, thou mayst assure thy selfe it hath & shall be acted with all the demonstrations of a pure and sincere love towards thee, & I do send my servant as my forerunner to know at this time how thou dost, hoping to heare yet of thy growing better & better before I see thee, w^{ch} shall bee as soone as possibly my businesse will permitt, yea & sooner too if thou requirest it.'

March 16,
1664.

The improvement is not sustained, and Lady Hobart's mind misgives her: 'Pray dow not stay to Long, nor kep your son, for i am so full of fears that i dar not stur, for fear she shold have a freck of running out . . . in earues she is

very disablogin. I fear you have played the arant Theife with me for all my fin seeds, I have bin starek mad for them; it was ill don to tack all. Send me som of them agan, or your wig shall off. As the weather is windy & stormy abrod, we have had our shar with my cosen with in. She has bin very ill yuemered, by fits i may tell you mad. She has cryed & scremed & singed & raled on us all, & por docker tow. Now Bats is all & all with hur; she says she thinks in hur hart he is not yet corrupted, but thar is nothing but hur mayd Jan, but longs for hur deth. She dos says such things as flesh and blod never hard. To days i kept from hur, only morning and night Locked in to see how hur to mads did order her.

'She has tacken ephsome waters this thre days. I fear her ill yumer will never be quered [cured]. For two days she did cry send for hur hus, but now she is off from that, but she dos hat us all. O dear sur raph i feare she will never be well, hur por hus will have a sad tim with hur. He must stick to it, but for us we may be quit of it in tim. I lock on her as one has brought a fountin to your son, but tis with so many ill yuemers, that he had beter have had a sober woman in her smock. God give him pushene to bar his cros. . . . My hous has bin very unfortunat to hur, & she says she will set a cros on it. We shall be very hapy & quiet when we have got you agan. The garden locks so findly you wold be plesed with it. Dear Sir be Love i cold sarve you next to my Nat with my Lif. . . . She says we wold poison hur. Pray Let hur husband com up, for i can not abyd to be raled at. He will kep hur from it.'

Her next letter has been labelled 'Lady H. persuades Sir R. V. to marry.' 'Sir I am Joyed to hear you ar will. You have the plesuer of the country & the fin flours now in the spring, but I cold wish that worck men war as hard to get as gold then you wold not set them a worck. You had beter be hear & viset the fin wedows so in time you mought get a companion; tis tim, for when i lock on that plas whar you have Layd out so much mony, & you still a lon at Bed & Bord, i thinck half that, with a good vartus hansom sober

bedfellow was beter, as now your eas stands. For I fear your sonn will not have much comfort in this woman, for in deed she gros wors than ever. She gros very malisas in hur toung to us all. She has set us all out to Sir Robert wisman in a bas manner.' Dr Denton is 'Cock sure she putts on & assumes much, very much of the vastly extravagant humors.'

An entreaty for Edmund's return is the ever recurring burden of Lady Hobart's letters, she is in deep distress at the poor woman's vagaries. 'She gos out with her mayd to Lincosdend chapell. Thay goo so Lick trampis, so durty tis a sham to see them. Docker denton did chid them soundly. Now she will have coridon [Dr. Colladon]. Truly she is starck mad . . . Sir Robert wiseman says it war fit she shold be removed . . . for his part he wold not have hur for a hundred pounds in his hous. Thay say he gave hur very good counsell, & did chid hur mitily. . . . I fear she will be wors; she eats one bet & feds Jan with another, & drincks to hur, & they Ly in on another's arms; so much dearnes i never saw. She bit Des to-day & tor hur hed, for she was in the hall, & begon to fall a roing, & she tock hur up in hur arms & cared hur up, be caus that was compeny about. Now dear sur Raph send her hus up, for she will dow som extravagant thing, & I can not help it. I have don all I can, it will not dow. Dear dow not tack it ill that i dow not goo to hur, for my care shall be never the Les. . . . I am slepy and vexet, & now I fear I have vexed you, but I say no mor.'

Sir Ralph still lingered on and was anxious to delay his son's return to such sad duties. Dr. Denton supports Lady Hobart's appeal. 'I leave the pretty stories to my Lady to write, but its high time both you and your son were here.'

This letter crossed one of Mun's to his wife, remonstrating with her ou her ingratitude to such good friends: 'You yeild to your black melancholy and dismall humours so much that they overcome you at last in such measure as to make you seeme extravagant; but pray do so no more, & then & never till then will I beleave that you love me.'

Dr. Denton writes again: 'this morninge I went accord-^{April 2,}
inge to custome to visitt my neece, who kept me an houre ¹⁶⁶¹
by the clock, & I beleave by her good will would not be
without a Phismicary, a minute by night nor by day, &
therefore I must love her dearely, but in truth I used her
very coarsely, for she drest her selfe in all hast to goe to
church, & I kept her in by force. She was gott halfe way
downe staires, & I made Besse take her in her armes &
carry her upp, I told her in plaine tearmes that she was
mad & was now to be used as those in Bedlam, & that her
maids should be putt away, & straungers putt to her to
master her, & that I would not venture her husband to
sleepe with her. Though I talked all the while after this
rate, yet (whatever she thought) she gave me not an ill word,
but seemed rather the better for it. You will find that rough
meanes will prevaile best & most with her. I pittie poore
Mun, & longe to see you both here, and see good night
to you.'

'Yesterday docker Bats saw hur in a wors fet then ever ^{April 7,}
he did,' Lady Hobart writes, ' & he sayd he wold com no mor. ¹⁶⁶¹
This day she raves for Prydian [Dr. Prujeau] but till my
cosen coms i will dow nothing. I will run away if he coms
not. Dear sur, pety your son & at present por me. Tusday
was hur bearthday, & the docker tould hur he wold com
& drinck hur health, & so he did, & bespock all he wold have
& brought all his family. They set him on the scor abot
forty shilings, ther was Mr. fuler & his wif & all the rest,
& thay war very mery. She cam down, & for half an hour
did eary hur self will, but be for & afther she was as bad as
ever.' Lady Elmes wrote of these dismal festivities to her
brother: 'The 5th instant we all drancke your helth att my
lady Hobart's; my uncle Dr. inviteing himselfe & all of us
heare to supper to my Neese Verney, it being her berthday.
Soe she was forsed to treat us, my uncle asureing her he
& all his wolde come to her. I wish I had cause to say we
did it with Joy.'

Mun returned soon after his wife's birthday; he had
only been gone a fortnight, though his absence had seemed

April 8,
1664.

so long to Lady Hobart. He wrote to his father telling him of his poor wife's extravagances, two nurses are constantly with her. 'Mon oncle Gale n'est pas en ville, mais le chevalier Wiseman me conseilla de la mettre dans la maison d'une nommée Lentall, en la rue d'Aldersgate, qui prend des gens comme cela, mais me semble à moi, et à d'autres de mes amis, que ce lieu la est trop scandaleux et deshonorable. Je voudrois bien que ma mère fut ici.'

Lady Hobart is full of pity for the poor husband. 'Truly it has put him in gret Distractions, but now i hop he will bar it heter, sene he sees it can be no heter. For presane she is removed, & it is so remoet that she can not be hurd to your chamber. We have borded up the wendow & Locked & hared up all saf. In earnis she is in a wors madnes then ever, though not so raving, for now she wil nether drinck, nor tack her fisick, but Ly & beanon hur self. She is falen quit away, her thy is no higher then Besis arm, & as Limp as can be. At this rate she can not Last. . . . Praysend up if you have it, the spon to put fisick doun hur throt.' 'Now she thuncks hur selfe bewiched, & i am one & have an evell ey, but this is not to the purpos. My nat I blis god is very will, & very much your sarvant. I am the worst in the hous, but rub out. I shall chear up when you com.' Dr. Denton has 'cut off her haire.'

April 15,
1664.

'I pray bee alwaies uppon your Guard,' writes Sir Ralph, 'I meane by way of Watchfulnessse, for if she will hurt her selfe in those sad fits, none can bee secure thats with her. I shall pray for her recovery, & that Heaven would direct you in this grente businesse. God bless her & you.' 'Tell me who is about your wife Night and Day, for she must not bee left alone, nor with any that are affrayed of her. I am soo troubled for her, that it puts my Businesse out of my Head.' . . . 'I finde you wish me at London, & were it in the leust kinde advantageous to you or your Wife to have me there I would come away at a minutes warning. But since I can doe neither of you two any good, perhapps I may stay heere a few dayes longer, in hopes to heare some better Tydings of her, for the

April 10,
1664.

April 11,
1664.

April 18,
1664.

truth is it affects me soe much heere, that I am not very desirous to come nearer, for though she speakes scencibly, & that you thinke she doth not rave, yet I heare she often makes a very noyce, soe that she is heard by the Neighbours, & that must needes encrease the greife of any man that heares it. God direct you for the best. I thinke you may doe well to meet your Mother halfe a mile out of Towne with your coach & carry her to your Wife presently; I thinke she will take it kindly. She comes upp in Sexton's coach. The House you speake off in Aldersgate St. I doubt is for a meaner sort of people. Tis best to let her owne ~~friendes dispose her~~, for that will give more satisfaction to all that side, & thats to bee your endeavour, for all your owne friendes are satisfied already.'

The perplexed husband hears of a woman named Clark, who undertakes to cure his wife in two months for 20*l.*; but he dares not trust Mary to her without consulting her uncle Gale. Edmund will not consent to put her in a public institution, or in any house where they would be free to take in other patients; he thinks of taking a private lodging, observing exactly all that the doctors prescribe for her treatment. Sir Ralph replies: 'I know not what to say to the Woeman more then this, that unlesse her owne friends desire & advise it, twill not bee fit for you to put her to bee cured, for if any ill accident should follow, all the world would blame you for it. I confesse divers Woemen have very good receits, & good successe too, & frequently have cured those that the Drs. have not; but all that will not excuse you from a just censure.'

Lady Hobart writes: 'Your son's wif is very ill uemored ^{April 21,} still. I am the divell of divells; I sent hur hus in the ^{1664.} contry, & she thincks i kep him away all day, & thes ar the quarels with me. Thay ar removing hur; god blis hur whar ever she goos. Mrs. Beckerstaf had a dafter, as she is 13 year, & a woman did cuer hur. The woman was hear & dos ax but 20 pound, & dos not desier it till she is cuered. I find the dockers are not wiling to Let it be don that way. She is one of that quality that must not be delt with Lick

another, but if she war my child I shold venter hur. But your son has a wolf by the ear.'

The spring of 1664 was 'a rare season,' Croweshall was in more than its usual beauty, and Doll Leeke longed for Sir Ralph 'to smell the sucklins and the stocks & to see the new trees grow.' There is a little Vere now, the light of her grandmother's eyes, chasing butterflies in the prim old garden, who sends a baby message that 'she owes hir dear Verney a thousand kisses for gloses & ribins' and desires 'her constant service' to him. Lady Gawdy is shocked to hear that her old friend is so much upset by the family troubles that he thinks of going abroad. 'You must pardon mee,' she writes, 'if I presume to tell yōu, that if you forsack your one contry, & should goe by yond sea, you would bee very unjust to your sonne, your selfe, & to all that have the honour to bee related to you. This is a time most proper of all your life to sett at the helme, & to help steere for your famelys good. . . . It is possible the wisest parsons may faile in there iudgments, when there consernes dus transport, & a foole may chanse to show them the neerest way to there hapines; if I were so blest I should never againe repine at my want of wisdom. I am extremly greved to heare the sad condission of your daughter dus so highly woorke upon you. Deare Sir you have to sattisfie your selfe that never parson in the world has used such a relation more oblegingly, nor passed by all offences so silently as you have. Therefore doe not destroy your selfe by discontent.' Sir Ralph assures her that whatever his thoughts may have been he has no present intention to travel, and her obliging letter has convinced him 'that tis not yet fit to be donn.'

Doll Leeke is of opinion that 'they take a very ill way with my cossen Verney to send hir to Dr. prijon's; I never heard of any he cured, and hers is of that natur, that if she wear well, the next thing that crost hir yumer should put hir in it again.' 'Let not that Doctor yus hir any more so ruffly,' she writes again later. 'I studed hir a littell, & I am much deseved if any Doctor can make a perfect cure in hir. Nothing but death can free hir from that disese, which

May 12,
1664.

May 1664.

April 27,
1664.

May 18,
1664.

will be a blessing to her & to us all . . . I wish my self with you som times to make you mery, though my yuener is not very gamesom.'

Mary's health improved, however, beyond expectation, and by the middle of August she was moved to East Claydon accompanied by 'the woman Dr.'

Sir Ralph writes from Preshaw: 'Mun, I very much Aug 24,
1664 desire to heare how your Wife is now, & whether she begius to minde her household businesse, & ordering her Family. In earnest you must perswade her to it by all the wayes you can & commend her doing of it at all times, & though she doe not doe it well, yet you must commend her for it, & keepe her to it, still; for as her condition is I had rather she should doe it, though she doe it ill, then any body else though they doe it well. Beloeve me though you loose by her doing of it, yet you will gayne ten times as much by it another way; for if she would bee brought to imploy her minde about it, I am confident it would doe her more good then all her Plusick. Let her governe the whole Family, & let her give order for everything in it, & not trust to others doeing of it, but doe it her selfe. And I thinke tis best to get her to keep a house booke, & set downe all thats bought, & cast it upp once a Weeke (every Friday night). She her selfe may cast it upp as often as she pleaseth, but you need doe it but once a Weeke. Be sure you put this on with all your endeavours, for if anything under heaven doe her good, tis imployment, a full & constant imployment. God blesse you both together—Your loving father R. V.'

Edmund sends him a cheerful account of their joint Aug. 29,
1664. doings. '*Ma femme se porte bien, mais ayant hier beu beaucoup de vin, et mangé du fromage, elle commençoit au soir a estre un peu detournée . . . Je suis d'avis qu'elle mesnagera sa maison tres bien, et qu'elle si addonnera avec le temps. Nous sommes allés, elle et moy seulement, dîner chez le Chevalier Pigott, ou elle se deporta extremement bien, devant grande compagnie, nous avons esté aussi chez mon Cousin Dormer, et demain nous irons à Ratcliff.*'

The friends who had so patiently borne with Mary in her

madness were not forgotten. Edmund sent Lady Hobart's daughter Frank a present of 5*l.*, and 10*l.* to sister Anne. Frank replies: 'I have sent according to your desires the spatula, which I was in hops you would not have used any more. For the mony it came to my hands—I have given the ten pounds to Nan, who returns her humble thanks to you. But for the last it gave me soe great a surprise that it put me strangely out of contenance to receve favours of that nature where I have merited soe little. I can not expresse the joy I have to heare you arrived safe at Claydon, where I wish my poor cousin may have an absolute cure. It shall be my continuall prayer, & in order to her futer repose, let me begge of you to be more kind, for of late you have bine too ruffle. Consider you have your perfect reson, she is deprived of hers, & imput all her errors & indiscretions to her dis-temper, & bare with them as you have done formerly. There is nothing will be more acceptable to god, nor can any thing render you more considerable to all the world. I hope you will be more noble then to trample upon what is in your power. Let not any of her little miscarriages chang the goodness of your natur. Beleve me cousin, it is the great respect I have for you, & the affection I beare to your wiffe maks me take this liberty.'

Lady Hobart could not but rejoyce to have her house to herself again; she is looking into every chest and cupboard with severe reflections upon Mary's maidens. 'Bess is the gretis slut I ever had in my lif & now i com to lock up all my things has destroyd me mor then ever any sarvant did, & the basest desembling wench ever cam into any bodys hous. She is refreshed by a visit to Sir Thomas and Lady Hewitt at Pishobury. 'If you wold tack your coch & com & fech me,' she writes to Sir Ralph, 'you ned not fear your recepson; it will be bo yound your mearit. I wish you hear, for in my Lif you never saw mor netnes & clendlynnes; & then a willcom with so much fre kindnes as wold winn any cature to admier it. I never was mor plesed in any plas in my Lif.' Sir Ralph had been invited shortly before to dance at 'Arabella Hewytt's wedding.'

Lady Hobart writes to Mun, 'I have a tru Love for you both. She is a very good woman, & if she mends will be consedrable to you I hear she locks to hur hous wil, & gros a pety huswif & delights in it. Oysters ar very good, & I know you Love them, so I have sent you a basket of them.' 'My wife (I praise God) is very hansomly recovered every way,' Edmund replies, '& did fully resolve were she not so very slow (I know not how sure shee may bee), to write unto your Ladiship an epistle of hearty thanks for all your singular & manifold favours whereof you have been so liberall to her & mee both. Indeed they have been so vast, that I cannot imagine how she'll euer be able to set forth her deepe sence thereof, for I am certain my Witt can never do it for either of us.'

Edmund expresses in every letter his joy in his wife's recovery; both were taking pleasure and interest in their home and its plenishings. Frank Hobart is to send down curtain rods; Sir Nathaniel is to order a frame for what his wife calls Edmund's 'gibbonish Whimwham'; while Mary at her own pace writes a number of epistles to Aunt Elmes about feminine shoppings. 'Sr Ralph & my cosen Luke both teles me, as you ded before, that gimp is out of fashing; tharfore i shall quit my selff of the troble by taking your advice to worke a dimity bed in gren cruells. For a drawing-rome i should have 2 squobs, & 6 turned woden chars of the haith of the longe seates. Be pleased to by a tabel & stands of the same coler; & for the same rome a pair of andirons, doges, fire shvl, tongs & thre bras flours with irnes to fasten my glas. I have yet my closet to furnish, & I beg your asistanc in it. I think to hange it with peregon, but the coler, & whether it shall be watered or no i leve to you. If goodnese might merit honer, thar is none could be greater then dere Aunt Elmes; my self only hapy in being alied to a person so truly vertuous.' Aunt Elmes can find no tolerable chairs under 7s. apiece, and the squobs 10s.

Mary's improved health was not without relapses; her husband describes her in the beginning of December as ^{Dec. 8,} ^{1664.} 'toujours fantasque.' 'Mun,' writes Sir Ralph, 'I am un-

willing you should be soe much alone tis ill both for your Wife & yourselfe too. I am glad the Rogues got not to your Horses you must let Gutindg lie over the Stable. I could now get you a furious Mastiffe, but tis little and indeed too furious, espetially for you that dwell in a Towne & soe neare the Highway, for this even in the day time will let non come to the House, & had you such a Curr, I would never come to your House, having knowne soe much Mischiefe donn by them. A little yealping Dogg that were watchfull & angry were much more usefull to you, for the Rogues have tricks to quiet Mastiffs, but non can quiet these little Barking currs.'

'To deale freely with you,' he writes a few days later, 'I shall not send you a furious cust Mastiffe, God knows there is too much of that already. . . . But to be more searous, I am hartily sorry to heare your wife hath been ill of Late, I pray humour her all you can till this publique time is over. God blesse & direct you.'

Edmund was inquiring for a responsible person who could wait upon his wife, and keep up some discipline in a household that sadly needed it. Mary had seen and liked a certain Mistress Fulton, but the latter made so many stipulations about her salary of 12*l*, about the chambermaid that was to work under her, and other matters, that Edmund was not very anxious to have her. Mrs. Felton was not free till the spring, and he specially desired that Mary should be saved fatigue during the Christmas season, when they hoped to celebrate their return home by a series of entertainments to their neighbours.

During the summer of 1663, Mary Eure had suddenly abandoned her Elizabethan attitude, and given her heart and hand to a Yorkshire squire, William Palmes. Her best friends knew nothing of it, 'My marriage,' as she afterwards wrote to Sir Ralph, 'being for some reasons concealed from almost all my relations.' She had now engaged her old friend Luce Sheppard to come to her for an expected confinement, and Edmund, who had not forgotten Luce in preparing his Christmas presents, tried to get her to help

his wife, before she should be needed by 'Cousin Palmes' in February. Luce was engaged till the New Year, when she hoped to 'ogment his trouble' by coming to wait on him and his lady. Another possible lady housekeeper was the widow of a Mr. Major, with 40*l* a year of her own, of a sedate age, the daughter of a Mr. Crisp, whose house she used to manage, 'so she has had experience, and is as well educated, and as well born, but less necessitous than Mistress Felton.' Sir Ralph writes, 'I do not know Mrs. Major, but I beleeve her to bee very honest & modest, because all the Brood have been soe. But I must tell you many of them are very slow, & (as we call them) softly persons, & being behinde hand in the world, have not had any Breeding, & if this bee soe she cannot bee fit for your purpose.'

Edmund asks Sir Ralph's help in organising his Christmas entertainments. Michel Durand has become head cook, and he wants to borrow him. Sir Ralph entered heartily into their hospitable plans. 'Sir Richard Temple tells mee the newes at Buckingham is, that you will keepe the best Christmas in the Shiere, & to that end have bought more frute and spice then halfe the Porters in London can weigh out in a day. I have writ to tell the Cooke that hee shall doe my businesse about the Beefe at such times as you can most conveniently spare him from East Claydon; and soe hee may very well, for hee hath nothing to doe for mee but to make 2 collars of Beefe, & bake some in Potts. I am very glad to heare your Wife is so well, I pray remember mee to her, & tell her I wish her a Merry Christmas.' Plaistow the carrier expects a Christmas box of 10*s*. for the delivery of letters, which is what he receives at Claydon House.

Sir Ralph is anxious that his sporting dogs should go to Sir John Busby to be trained, but Sir John does not think the season favourable. 'For Gamboy and Fleury if they are not entered they will be spoyled, for when they are too old they will not enter so well, & bee so easily corrected for there faults; you know tis soe with children, & if Sir John Busby bee unwilling, let mee know it, never presse

Dec. 22,
1664.

him, for I can send them where they shall be welcome. I pray tell me how Mary-gold looks.' 'You see what a poore case Sir John Busby had made of Mopsey,' he writes again; 'she looked like one of Pharoah's Leane Kine; on the other side, you keepe them soe fat, that they will burst themselves with running' The dogs are to be 'constantly hunted.' 'I had much rather you should see it donn, then any man in England, for tis both a healthfull & a gentleman like exercise, iny deare Father loved it hartly.'

'Touchant Chiens,' Edmund replies, 'dont deux (c'est à dire) Luther et Calvin sont aussi mechans que ces Arche-Herétiques desquels ils portent les noms, car comme iceux il ne cherchent pas le vrai butin de leur recompence, car ils tuent les innocens Brebis, mais principalement ce vaut-rien Calvin.' Sir Ralph orders that if the 'Whelps meddle with Sheepe, they must be tied to any Dead sheepe, and whipped soundly, but not beaten with Sticks; tis theire mettle that makes them doe, and such a fault as must bee corrected, and in time too, or else they will be spoyled. I pray let it bee carefully donn.'

He is getting Mun some mulberry trees 'of Mr Ball of Brentford End,' 'they love a moist ground & will thrive best in it.'

Dec. 25,
1664.

The country is surprised to hear of the 'monstious sum' of 2,500,000*l.* granted to the King. Edmund thinks Holland might be conquered with half that money. A postscript of Sir Ralph's contained the bitter news which had just reached London. 'The Duch have beat us out of Cape Verde at Guiny, taken the Marchant Shippes, put our men to the sword for resisting them. De Ruiter did it with his Fleet, & tis feared hee will do us mighty mischeifes in the streights.'

The Puritans might put down roast beef and mince pies and the time-honoured festivities of this season, but naval defeats were not wont to be part of the Christmas fare which they provided for England. Edmund, whose hearty dislike of the Dutch was founded on intimate personal acquaintance, was most indignant, and thought that our reverses in Guinea might have been foreseen and prevented,

'mais cela estant fait, si j'estois digne de conseiller le Roy, Dec 26,
je voudrois tascher par tous les moyens du Moude à me 1664
venger sur De Ruter, avant son retour; est je ne lui
voudrois point donner Cartier, ni à aucun autre Hollandois
en aucun lieu de l'Univers . . . et pour moy je suis content
de me vendre jusques à la chemise, et puis d'aller en
Personne pour punir ces villains de Belge.'

Edmund Denton's widow is ill and something in Mary's
condition of mental distress, Dr. Denton has been frightened
'out of 4 of his 5 senses' at a report that her mother Lady
Rogers, 'who is no better than a Quaker,' is planning a
marriage for her with a man 'of noe fortune & of as froward
a humour as one would wish . . . the children would be
undone as to breeding . . . this is of great concern to the
family.' The calamity seems to have been averted, and
the children were made wards in Chancery. The poor
young widow died the following June, 'rather a happiness
for her family than a loss.'

Edmund Verney wishes Alexander Denton 'here to Dec. 26,
Xmasse with us, & we would be merrier yet, & shew 1664
marveillous Gamball trickes.' Meanwhile the festive pre-
parations were being hurried on; the presence of the
Claydon cook ensured the success of the joints and plum
porridge; but the drink caused Edmund some anxiety.
He flattered himself that he had brewed a good store of
strong ale, but he had no common white wine, and his best
claret was too good for the occasion; 'trop genereux pour
Paisanterie, en sorte que si je scavois ou acheter un peu de
vin de France, a fort bon marché (je ne me souci gueres de
la bonté), je l'espanderois ce Noell parmy mes Villains.'
Sir Ralph believes that he may get 'Claret of 6 pence a
quart . . . & good enough for the use you intend it, and
twere pittty to cast away better in that way . . . I will
look out some for you . . . twill be ready enough to drinke
in two dayes for it shall have no Lees, & you may draw it
out of the Runlet without Bottleing it, if you have no time
to bottle it.'

Before the wine arrives, this unthriftty host discovers

that he does not require it, because the best claret will not keep and may as well be finished, later he is glad of it again, when the strong ale proves to be no better than it should be. Mary sends loving messages to Sir Ralph, desiring his blessing, and rejoicing in the prospect of his speedy return to Claydon, where his presence will add to all their Christmas joy. He desires her to thank Heaven and be careful of her diet. Her East Claydon tenants were feasted on the 27th, Middle Claydon tenants on another day, and their third and last entertainment was given to 50 of their poorer neighbours with their wives and children. Wine and ale, good, bad, and indifferent, flowed in streams, Edmund reported that the 67. claret had served its purpose well; 'il plaist les gueulles de ces gens, et aide aussi à les enivrer, mais pour mon gout il n'est guère plaisant.'

Jan. 5,
1665.

'Mun, I presume you have ended your Christmas,' writes Sir Ralph on the 5th of January, 'and I hope you have not found the charge extraordinary; I dare say a journey either to London or to Oxford for that time would have been much dearer & lesse to your credit. I am heartily glad my Daughter is soe well, I pray you remember me very kindly to her, & desire her to take noe l'hisick whilst the Frost holds, but I hope when that's over she will take a little for a day or two, to carry away the reliques of the Plumbe Pyes and Plumbe Porage. I am glad Luce Shepherd comes to keepe her company for she is too much alone.' He had paid civil visits in town to Mary's uncles, Mr. Gale and Sir Robert Wiseman.

The chief local news is that Edward Chaloner has bought Steeple Claydon from his cousin. 'Il a tenu une Court là déjà en son propre nom, et ce matin il s'en est allé vers Gisborough en Yorkshire. La Veuve Busby doit laisser Addington bien tost pour tout de bon.' She is 'much troubled by disputes with her son.' Mistress Abigail was the widow of Robert Busby (Sir Ralph's legal adviser at the time of his sequestration) and daughter of Sir John Gore, knight and alderman of London. She came of a strong-willed family; her husband stood in considerable awe of her; her younger brother Dick defied the authority of the

redoubtable pedagogue at Westminster School, who was his godfather as well as his master, till Dr. Busby 'was a-weary of slashing him' Her son, Sir John Busby, Kt., had married Mary Dormer in November 1662, and it was not surprising that after two years' experience of her mother-in-law's rule, the young Lady Busby should wish to be mistress at Addington.

Squire Duncombe's betrothed, whom he had courted so fervently, died of a fever. He also caught it, but having recovered, consoled himself with another Miss Busby, of Hogston, a Roman Catholic; John Coles, vicar in 1611, was said to have turned Papist and perverted the Busbys. They were married in April, and Sir Ralph's cook dressed the wedding dinner. Miss Butterfield was staying at the White House, and the whole party dined with the Duncombes to meet the Busbys of Addington. 'We keep good fires at Claydon, but none like Squire Duncombe's,' said Mr. Butterfield, and Mun writes of the dinner: 'On dit qu'il a acheté tous les perdrix, becasses, becassines et autres volailles de cette Province pour nous entretenir.' The hospitable Squire had lately borrowed 1,000*l.* of Mrs. Abell and Sir Robert Wiseman.

Mun writes, 'J'ai à cette heure fini mes festins de Jan. 9,
Noël, mais . . . avec trop grands depens, car cela m'a 1665.
coûté proche 100*l.*, c'est à dire j'ai despendu 80 livres, la
quelle somme est trop pour moi à jeter comme cela, si par
la bonté de Dieu je vis jusques à un autre Noël je ne des-
penderai tant.'

Sir Ralph replies, 'I am glad your troublesome & charge- Jan. 12,
able time is over, but you are certainly much out of your 1665.
account, for it could not cost you halfe soe much as you
speake of, you making but 3 Invitations & haveing noe
Fiddles to draw other company. Dr. Townsend writ word
you entertained him & Nat Smith very hansomly; and now
Uncle Dr. is in the Country you had best goe visit him & get
him dine with you.' Edmund writes again, 'Mon très cher Jan. 16,
père, Vous doubtez si mes depens ce Noël peuvent avenir 1665.
à une telle grande somme, mais sur serieuse consideration
d'iceux, il faut que je vous responde (comme les Hollandois

font à ceux qui questionnent leur compte, contans plus qu'il n'estoit auparavant) que je crois certes qu'il m'a cousté plustost proche de 90%. que 80%. Nous n'avons pas manqué musique seulement, mais aussi nous avons eu Dançeurs qu'on appelle Morice; et tout cela je ne pouvois remedier pour cette fois '

Edmund's lavish hospitality had reinstated him in the good opinion of his neighbours; he was at length settling down in his own home, with some prospect of domestic happiness, and had been able to increase his estate by one or two judicious purchases; as Cousin Jack Fust expressed it, 'you must needs be my Lord of East, West, North and South Claydon.'



PORCH OF THE WHITE HOUSE, EAST CLAYDON

CHAPTER XLV.

SIR RALPH'S RELATIONS.

1661 1665.

THE Restoration suited Colonel Henry Verney exactly; the world was once more fit for a gentleman to live in. He talked valiantly at first of military service, and of commanding 'Viscount Mordaunt's regiment of foot at Windsor,' but hearing that he would be employed in a lower rank than he had held during the Civil War, he found this incompatible with his dignity, and did not press the point. Sir Ralph considers that 'these punctillios are not to be stood upon by younger brothers, especially at this time when soe very many persons of worth and honour doe rather chuze to take what they can get, then be left out of all imployment,' but he will not offer to advise him.

My Lord of Peterborough and Henry's other noble patrons were in high office, his father's name was constantly in his mouth. He was magnificent in his offers to procure a peerage for his brother and a baronetage for Dr. Denton, a commission for himself being of course included in the required fees. 'He thinks of nothing but an Irish Viscount, the usual price it seems is 2,500*l.*, if you will not give him 250*l.* per an. for his life he will take 200*l.*' Unhappily, his relatives were only moved to merriment by the prospect of such honours; but he was more successful in ingratiating himself at Court. His knowledge of horses and dogs, and his keen sporting instincts, ensured him a welcome from the King at Newmarket and other races; he was well known also to the Duke and Duchess of York. Lord Clarendon's affectionate intimacy with Sir Edmund Verney led him to

be kind to his sons, and our old friend William Gape the apothecary and his wife were in attendance upon the Duke and Duchess Anne. Eventually Henry claims a share 'in the moneys given by Act of Parl^l amongst the truly loyal & indigent officers'; he certifies that he was 'a Lieut. Coll. to Sir Humphrey Bennett's Reg^t of Horse, hath had a reall command of souldiers according to his comission, that he hath never deserted his Maj^{ty} or his blessed Father's service during the late times of Rebellion and Usurpation, & that he hath not a sufficient livelyhood of his own.'

The 'truly loyal & indigent gentlemen' were so numerous that Henry fared no better than many a nobler Cavalier, but to be loyal and indigent was at least a passport to the best society.

April 2,
1662.

Penelope, whose letters bristle with great names, writes to Sir Ralph of the marriage of Charles Stuart, Duke of Richmond, to his second wife Margaret Banastre, widow of William Lewis. 'Upon Monday last the Duke was married, upon Tuesday he went out of town & his Duchess for Blechinton, upon Thursday the Duke & my Bro. Harry that went out of town with his Grace, are for Rouhamton, the plate is to be run for that day, the Duke puts in for it but tis thought the Duke's horse will lose the match, Bro H. has betted on the Duke's hors. . . . The Duke was pleased to do my Bro. Harry the honor as to bid him com to his weding, that was carried so privitly that no other parson was invited; but Bro. Harry was so very ill that morning that he could not Attend his honor, att dinner time he went to the Duke's own lodging for there he dined very privit, Bro. Harry was so ill that he ris from diner and came home and att night he went agane to attend the Duke att the Duke's lodging, but still kept himself fasting only eating a mess of broth. . . . he is still ill but if he dos hear of a rase that is to be Run, that will carry him all the world over.'

June 9,
1662.

In June Henry is looking after his young horses at Claydon, whence Mr. Butterfield writes to Mun: 'Had you seen or heard how Mr. H. V. & Mr. Jo. Risley cheated one the other in the exchange of two admirable jades, with

what craft & confidence it was carryed, twould make you intermit a litle of your serious thoughts to take a laugh' Henry is engaged at Christmas time 'to ride with the Duke in person the 6 mile course at Newmarket with a Nagg of his called Shoulders,' and he is a well-known figure at the various county race-meetings. Dec. 3,
1662

In October, Penclope's husband, John Denton, died suddenly in London. Cary writes to Sir Ralph, 'I beleve the nuw widdows grife is over before you could come to comfort her. I wish no greater grife may ever come to you or my selfe then that was to Hary & her, and then I am shur wee may well bar it.' 'She is not lik to breack her hart except it bee with joy,' writes Lady Hobart, and Dr. Denton adds, 'You ought to have come thro' thick & thin to have comforted your most consolable sister.' The kind-hearted Mun does his best to regret him. 'Alas my uncle John Denton is dead, I am sorry for't, that's more than some are, altho' he should be of a greater consequence methinkes to them by farr.' Sir Ralph's words to the widow check our uncharitable reflections upon the poor, drunken, boorish Squire. 'And now hee is dead, I shall say nothing of him, nor will you I hope either doe or say more then is decent in such a case: for tho' you have been unhappy in him, yet hee was a Gentleman & your Husband, & twill bee your Honour to conceale his faults. . . . God grant you may make a right use of this deliverance & fit us all for Heaven.' Pen's lady friends remark that 'she has put herself into very handsome mourning, but she cannot keep within.' Oct 29,
1663

In spite of some plain speaking to her brother, Pen had been a patient and forbearing wife. In the worst of her troubles she could truly say, 'Had he loved me but near so well as I did, or doe yet love him, the thinges had never com to whot they are.'

There had been occasional tiffs between Pen and Henry; he would torment her for loans, to be repaid 'when he won his horse-mach'; but they were at heart the best of friends; they now set up house in London together, 'Harry had

never been so full of joy,' and Pen, though she called him an old fool, rejoiced in 'his good company' and in her family nickname of 'Harry's Dame.' He would ride down to the races at Quanton, Brackley, and Banstead, or to a cock-fight at Northampton, bring back his gains to Pen, or explain away his losses, and abuse the town, 'where my stay is like to be but short, for foote it in the dust I cannot, & coach-hire is too dear for my purse.'

All their friends gamble in various ways. 'Mrs. Drake's sister has just gott the best lott in the lottery, the richest sute of hangings there: the King offered more than a 1,000*l*. for them, this she had for her 10*l*.'

There was no love lost between Penelope and the Dentons, and Nancy writes to Sir Ralph the following year. 'I know that newes is very axceptabil to pepeol in the cuntiy and I have wondarfull newes now, your Dearly beloved sis Denton is like to chous Hary and to marry. It is to one Mr. Wilcocks a Gentelman of Bray; he keps his coch, and he is as propar a man as her Esqre. was, but not altoguthar so handsom and altho' he has a very good reput yet I think he has no more wit then my Lord Jhon if he maies her. He was beloe stars in our hous, and I rund hard & did see him, but Hary has this day caried her out of town down to Stoe. This sarves us for merth very well. Shur if he dus take her he never looked out of the right cornor of his eye, I beleve she has great store of good condisions, for she nevar maid show of any in her life, she has horded them up with her money.'

July 2,
1668.

Henry's letters to Sir Ralph are full of minute directions about his horses; they are to have 'the very best grass at Claydon, these are my choicest horses and I dare not trust them for my nephew's usage, nor with noe friend but you. They are as good as can drive in a coach, and as fit for my saddell, and the only horses I have to trust to for Newmarket. The grey's feete are soe badd that noe smith can shoe him without laming him or else I had not putt him to grass. Good brother be careful of them.' Sir Ralph has them 'fleted in very good grasse at Knowle Hill, Tom King the

July 13,
1668.

shepherd is very careful of them. and removes them constantly, but such poor lame Jades in such a sunfeited condition will not bee fat in hast.' The Colonel is far from satisfied; he will not have his horses tethered. 'Good Brother . . . the worst grass you had had in your lordshipp would a binn better for them att liberty, for your own reason must needs tell you to have sunfeited and lame horses tied to a stake, basting all day in the sunn, cannot bee good for their health. Tis the night's due, scope, fresh water and liberty that must cuer them, it may bee you did conclude them to bee as disorderly as their master, and soe confined them without tryall.'

The long-suffering Sir Ralph agrees to send the greys to another ground; the pasture is far worse, 'but if they will not rest quietly there, rather than suffer them to lead my horses up and down the country [hedges are few and far between] they must be tied againe.' They are to be blooded at intervals of three or four months (even the horses cannot escape the thirst of the age for bleeding), after which they are 'to be corned something more than ordinarie,' to be ready when Henry desires 'to ramble amongst his friends.' He confesses that, thanks to Sir Ralph's 'kindness and Mr. W. Tones' care,' his horses do look very well; he has left them to Sir Ralph's 'good entertainment longer than ordinario, it was the king's fault and not mine.' 'I saw 3 good matches at Newmarket w^{ch} pleased the king well, but not my worshippe, for I gott no money by them more then my charges. My L^d Lovelass lost 600*l*. of his horse, Mr. Elliot won 400*l*. of his, & my L^d Sherard near 300*l*. of his nagg.'

Margaret Elmes was having a hard time of it with her cross-grained husband, the small allowance he had given her when they separated was often in arrears, and it was only when Sir Ralph threatened legal proceedings that Thomas would 'protest upon the word of a gentleman' that he wished to do all that was fair and honourable, and he would deliver Sir Ralph a lecture which he dared not give his wife, about the prudence and discretion needed

Dec 13,
1660.

in 'her carriage in the world.' 'As things are with her now, a private life is most for her repute and humiliation, rather than her going to this person and that person, to no purpose to herself but to be laughed at behind her back.' He will settle her jointure as soon as his debts are paid to 'Cousin Knightly'; he assures Sir Ralph that there is no hurry, as he never was in better health in his life. 'Elmes is going to fast & pray & soe cannot write to you,' says Uncle Doctor. Matters are not much more advanced at the end of another year. The delay is now caused by 'my cousin Humphry Elmes his death, the old gentleman you see at my chamber, I having been to Henley to see him interred & am just now come up to towne. I have written a kind letter to your sister. . . . were her heart & mine, as yours & mine are in principle it were far better for her. I know I need not write to you to say nothing to the women for you know how captious generally they are. I meane only for your sister's good . . . had I matched into another family I should have been more valedwed.' His wife's relations were certainly lacking in appreciation, and pronounced him to be 'the greatest tyrant in the world.'

Sept. 16,
1661

Peg naturally wanted something more substantial than the smothering of her complaints, and Sir Ralph had to write in a severe strain to his brother-in-law. 'Haveinge had soe many Yeares Patience, more then (as a Trustee) I could well answer.' He finds it almost impossible 'to keep them quiet for both of them are colerick & high enough, & have noe great fondness for one another.' Peg, indeed, had freely expressed her opinion, that the life she would lead with him 'is worse than keeping of hogs,' without even the alternative open to the prodigal of returning to his father's house.

The unwearied peacemaker, however, got the husband and wife to meet at Claydon in October with excellent effect. Old Aunt Abercromby indeed, writing peremptorily out of her bed to desire Sir Ralph to send her a fat goose 'for All Holland-day, lest wanting that, she should want money all the year,' congratulates Nephew Elmes on his 're-nuptials.'

Peg feels that due thanks to Sir Ralph are beyond her reach, but the second honeymoon did not open smoothly Oct 20,
1661
 'The disasters in our journey to London were soe many & soe great that I know you wolde a laughed sorfitiantly att me, had you but seen them. Our horses tiored as soone as we came out of Chalfont, for there was noe fresh ones to be had, it was neare eight a clock befoare we got to Lester Hous corner, when we ware in all that fine puddle, we had like to a binn over turned but escaped it, by haveing the coach helde up, while we a lighted in that cleane plaice, & when we ware out, the coachman made shift to drive his coache into sich a plaice as he could not pas through for postes, nether could he put back again, soe we ware forced to wolke from that Plaice to Covent Garden a fott, & not onely soe. but to take out all that was had in the coache a longe with us, for the coach was likely to stand in the feildes all night. My brother Harry was with us, but the Squir & Martin were gon home a horsback. Hary was loaded like a porter betweenc his own things & his dame's.'

Margaret Elmes was a clever housekeeper, 'Madam Spye-fault' the Doctor called her (which suggests a character in 'Pilgrim's Progress'), and Sir Ralph often applied to her in domestic perplexities. His pewter plates are not to his liking. 'If they are well washed,' she writes, 'every mealle with woater and brann, soe hott as there hands can indewar it, and then well rinsed in faire woater, and soe sett one by one, befoare the fire, as they may dry quick, I am confydent they will dry with out spots, for I never knew any sawce staine soe except it bee pickled rabbets, which stand up on the plait a pretty while, soe they will stoaine them fillthyly . . . this is all the scill I have, which I have set downe att large' She has made him lemon cakes, which he likes when he has a cold.

The Elmes' have been at Claydon again in the winter of 1664-5 and returned with Sir Ralph to London, when Mr. Thomas caused quite a commotion by his lamentations over the loss of an 'heirloom,' described as 'a Dial of Glass with a Fly in it,' which had belonged to his family for years and

years; he felt sure that his wife had taken this precious treasure to Claydon to hang up in her window, and had left it behind there.

Aunt Elmes disclaimed all knowledge of it, but Mun, on receiving his father's commands, went down with a party from East Claydon, and calling upon Mr. Butterfield to bear witness to their exertions, the young people made merry in the old house, going from one empty bedroom to another, finding nothing at all, till in the Orange Chamber Mun exclaimed that he saw 'something like to Flye'; there was an imprisoned owl in the window lately dead. Amid shouts of laughter, the bird was carefully packed up in many wrappings, and sent off to Thomas Elmes by carrier specially addressed 'to be conveyed to him with great care and speede,' with a mocking letter in which Mun explained that this was all they could find to answer the description of his heirloom; 'I know not what you call it at Greens Norton but here at Claydon wee call it *Owle*. Sir I killed lately just such another sitting on an *Elme*, whereby I conjecture there is much sympathy between them,' &c. &c. Unhappily for the success of the jest, Sir Ralph intercepted the parcel, which he thought of suspicious bulk and softness; he kept the folio sheet of banter, and paid the carrier. 'He is a strange mau,' he writes to Mun, '& his hatred to his Wife makes him doe many of these simple things. Certainly hee thinks hee saw a Diall at Claydon, or else hee could not have invented it, but I never remember anything like it in my House.'

Sir Ralph congratulates his sister when her jointure is settled, with a sly hit at her love of London. 'Madame Margery,—Rich, Rich, Rich, now your money is come, but if you are soe simple as to spend it, you shall bee caled by your Old Name, Poore, Silly, Lowsey Meg againe. This very day it came. . . . But I can tell you, that with your money, I had a letter, such a letter, that you will thinke it a good bargayne to give me halfe your Wealth to let you read it, & though my Answer to it is little worth, Yet I know you will bee soe Noble as to give me Two pence for the

sight of it. Enough of this till we meet. My Cozen Dorothy Denton is very well [at Hillesden] and Lives, and Lookes (and I am confident Thrives) as well as if she were at London. Mee thinke I heare you sweare this is a Loud Ly, And you will not beleieve it.'

Peg Elmes is quite capable of a retort. 'If we live to meete it is posable I may punish you for the stile of Maddam Megg, I see it is not good to be to longe from London, the cuntory teaching you sich ould clownish names, not fitt for sich a spruse widower as y' selfe to name. It is Enuffe to hinder the yonge bewtis from woing you, which I know will grieve you much. The incivilities I receive from Sir Thomas makes me to be all most reconsiled to the name which formerly I was not very fond of.'

Cary still leads as busy a home life as 'souch a train of babs' must entail; good John Stewkeley is proud to see the old nursery filled a second time. 'Here are many white aprons that have long strings,' he writes to Sir Ralph of his five baby girls, '& lusty armes that will pull hard.' His eldest son Will was at 'Winton College,' but the sudden death of Mr. May his tutor there, in 1657, caused Mr. Stewkeley to send for him home; he then placed him in London at Dr. Sterne's 'private academy with some ten gentlemen more.' During the Protectorate 'that intelligence given of Oxford by severall freinds that have made a strict inquiry, diverted his father from sending him thither.' At twenty-two he is a worthless beau; Cary talks him over with Brother Stewkeley, 'who is very good to her, though hee will sometimes lett us understand hee is lord over us. I truly love him very much for his care of my children . . . hee & we are both much trobled what will become of Will Stewkeley, who lives above what his father hathe for himselfe & all the rest; as great A gamster as my brother Hary & as great a rake, & I am confident the sotillest young man in the world, but not the best natured. He is now desirous to by a Court place, so that is next to be sout for, but his mind is so wavouring that I think hee will setill to nothing. Weo A low him 60%. a yeare, besides my brother's 10%, & he hath

lived on us most of this yeare him selfe, & latly hath taken a man unknown to his father, as all his actions are, & kept 2 horses constantly I find him a great burden, and I am afraid my brother should work on my husband to let him live thus, or ele to increas his Allowance which hee is not a bill to doe without prodigising all the rest'

Miss Ursula has not obliged her stepmother by marrying, though she is much in company. 'Tis not my patience only as they all make havock of, for my brother who I think hath some tye on them, crys out most shamefully on them; alas you only know the best of them,' Cary tells Sir Ralph, 'they differ so much from ther father as if he had no relation to them; bot tis none of them can make us unhappy to each other, though ther wayes lessens our Joys yet not our affections, which are absolutely fixed in each other which is amonst all my griefs the reallest comfort as can come to me.'

Cary has taken her own daughter Peg to Dauboney Turberville, an oculist at 'Crick Kerne,' who promises 'to butify her left eye,' but having seen her he reports it 'to be incurable & ther judgments all to be false, that have spent about her, I have hopes strong of her right Eye which labours with four diseases, ill Eyelids, & falling away of the haire, a spott on the pupill, & a corrupt fistula in the Corner of her Eye towards her nose. . . . I doubt not to save her Eye if you please to give mee time, I shall leave the gratification to your selfe, & my endeavours shall bee as nimble as possible.' He is to begin with 'an incision betweene her eye & nose to be kept open eight or ten weekes,' but he adds 'I shall not in all this time much torture her.' Peg underwent the oculist's treatment with 'much resolution & patience.' Cary hears 'a good report of him & his birth is very good which maks mee belive hee will perform what he promised.' Peg is always under treatment; after this she consults 'a mounty bank,' and hears her present darkness 'with hopes of sight,' because Prince Rupert gives him a good character. He attended Pepys, see 'Diary,' June 29 and July 3, 1668.

Cary's boy Jack is at school at his uncle's charge; 'sickness & want of hare are two great blemishes, but I hope

time & helth will renew his favour A game, & should I take him home his littill larning would sure be lost, which would be an inevitabill ruing to him.' Brother Stewkeley's 'humor is to love chang which is the undoing of boys & my boy loves the place very well wher he is, which I commend in him.'

The Rev. Charles Adams was settled at Great Baddow, his first and only living; he had a fine large church, and a fair stipend, but Betty was still looking out for preferment. She never liked Great Baddow till she had to leave it. 'Could you but get us A good parsinag I am confident I should live comfortablieley.' When real troubles failed, which was seldom, Betty had quite a craze for inventing them. Before the birth of her first child she was particularly ingenious; she had secured Sir Ralph as godfather, and she wrote to conjure him to protect her hapless infant, as she foresaw her own death, her husband's second marriage, and the child's cruel sufferings under a stepmother. Sir Ralph declined to pledge himself till the crisis arrived, but he got Peg Elmes to choose some 'Childes Clowtes,' and when the boy had been christened Betty thanks him for a 'silver sugar box & coddell cup.' This child died, and Betty never gave the cruel stepmother a chance, for she survived her husband many years, having brought him two daughters, Margaret and Isabella.

March 25,
1663.

Brother Tom is not to be ignored in this review of the family fortunes, though every member of it would gladly have forgotten him if possible. 'There are severall epitaphs,' he writes to Sir Ralph (anticipating by more than a century Mrs. Malaprop's 'nice derangement'), 'that belong to the word brother, as good, deare, hon^{roul} or the like, and in another (which in some may prove the more proper) sense, unkind, unnatureall or the like. Such strainge and unbecoming titles I forbeare to stile you with, though (haply) I have just cause for it. Sweet Brother, yours most cordially to serve you whilst he is Tho: Verney.'

June 19,
1663.

When he has tired out Sir Ralph he approaches Mun: 'Sir, Kings and Princes in time of need prayeth ayd of their Allies, therefore I conceive it noe dishonour to mee to

crave a supply from my relations. Sir, poverty to mee att this instant is as great an enemy as the Turk is to the Emperor of Germany, and doth dayly get advantages of mee. I have (by severall embassies) treated with my brother, who hath promised mee succour but not sufficient to oppose soe powerfull an enemy, which prompts mee to pray your assistance in some handsome manner, that I may be the better strengthened to encounter my approaching foe and abide him battaile' It might have gone hardly with the Turks, if the Empeior had had Tom's ready wit and fertility of resource.

March 26,
1664.

In '62 he intends going with the Earl of Windsor to Jamaica; in '63 he is developing 'a potash work'; the next spring he turns up in Ireland, and writes from Bandon Bridge to refute 'some scandal that was fomented against mee in my absence. . . . I would stop all clamorous reports if possibly I could, yet letters may miscarry, I am not within 35 miles of any post-town, besides the casualty of the sea is to be considered. A friend hath undertaken the conveyance of this to London, that hath correspondency in Cornwall & doth weekly return thither or to Plymouth, hides, tallow & the like.' Soon after this there is 'a flying report that Tom is gone for France,' Mrs. Tom 'is in want enough,' and intends to send the baby, born after his departure, 'cyther to the parish att Bristol or to Sir Ralph.' The poor woman comes to see him at Lady Hobart's, and tells him how much she had been 'injured & abused by her husband already; he hath gotten her portion, & so hath made her utterly unable to help the child or feed herself, having nothing but what her own friends in charity bestow upon her.' These friends press Sir Ralph to pay half Tom's annuity direct to his wife, but he has sold it in advance to Sir John Colladon, of the parish of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, who is also clamouring for payment. Sir Ralph can only desire Tom to take measures 'that hee may rest quiet from these importunities.' Tom is tragically indignant and surprised. 'Sir—had I been the worst of brothers, you could not have more estrainged your affections from mee,

May 31,
1664.

give mee (I beseech you) a little liberty to argue the case with you. Sir, is my concealment occasioned by or for reason of any treason, murder or felony committed against his majesty, or any of his liege people? You cannot but judge me innocent. Was I the first that left my native being for debt? I beleeeve I am not, & I am almost confident I shall not be the last. Truly I am not in love with a prison, neither dare I trust the conscience of any man since brother & brother are growne soe cruell one to another. I hope I shall have noe caus to putt your name in the Role of Unkind Brothers.'

He desires Sir Ralph not to pay Colladon any money, whom he has 'much enraged,' but in the closely written sheet there is not an allusion to his miserable wife and baby, and in June 'it hath pleased God to take away the childe.' Tom's comment on the news is, that he cannot be compelled to give his wife any of his allowance without 'a long & chargeable sute in Chancery, but I am not easily to be found, & death may take away the one as it hath done the other, before I make a returne homewards, I pray forbear speaking or writeing to mee concerning the party in any of your letters.' Sir Ralph cannot bear to be classed, even by Tom, in a 'Role of Unkind Brothers,' and continues to help him through Mr. Foulkes. Tom, on receiving an addition to his quarterage, sends him thanks 'in number numberless,' and quotes Tacitus 'who in his life of Otho sayd, There is not any one thing which persons of courage and quality doe suffer with more regret than that of poverty'; had he been blessed with an estate he would not have slept till he had repaid all Sir Ralph's benefits. 'My services to you and yours wishing you all health and happiness, as for any other of my relations let them be as they are :

June 24,
1664

July 10,
1665.

'When cloudy stormes are gone and past,
Then crums of comfort come att last.'

Tom finds his own peculiar 'crums of comfort' during the Great Plague in the chance 'that it may happily touch his chief creditor Colladon, before it yet leaveth.'

Eliza Verney's letters to Sir Ralph are eminently gentle and reasonable; she has exhausted all her own resources and the help given her by 'her uncle, Sir Verney Noell'; she entreats Sir Ralph to persuade her husband to live with her and to accept some employment which her friends will undertake to find him, or to divide his 200*l.* a year with her, which 'the world cannot say is an unreasonable request'

Aug. 30,
1670.

Tom is, however, quite scandalized that a deserted wife can permit herself to make such unpleasant suggestions to a man of culture and refinement. Nor does Sir Ralph feel able to interfere on behalf of the poor lady, whose petitions are as troublesome as her wrongs are indisputable; and Eliza's piteous appeals and Tom's highly moral begging letters continue to torment him. The more preposterous Tom's request is, the more Scripture he quotes in support of it; he also favours Sir Ralph with an essay upon 'The 3 Degrees of Ingratitude that history maketh mention of,' their characteristics and the penalties imposed upon them by the Egyptians and other ancient nations; Death alone being held fit to expiate the third degree, 'that the earth might quickly rot such an execrable creature as it had brought forth.' The due balancing of his sentences gives him never-failing pleasure, he would have supplied invaluable leading articles to a party paper with a daily demand for cheap abuse of the opposite side.

Aug. 30,
1670.

Tom remained some years in Ireland; at one time he is hiding from creditors, hunted by five couple of beagles and 'the pursuers,' but he proves, as he had boasted, 'not easily to be found, to the great charge of my malicious enemies'; then he is in clover again, having 'in travelling towards Limerick, received an invitation from one Sr George Hamilton, whose lady is Sister to y^e duke of Ormond, who knew mee (upon his intimate acquaintance with my brother Sr Ed :) at y^e first sight of mee, and treated mee far beyond my desert, and withall informed mee of some land y^t was allotted to my deceased brother for his arrears. Sr George telleth mee it cannot be less worth yⁿ 200*l.* per annum, & advised mee to look after it, which I should gladly doe, provided it be with

you good leave and liking.' 'Sir Daniel Treswell, lately dead, Sir Wm Flower and Mr. Stephens were the commissioners to allow & sell out Sir Edmund Verney's arrears.'

Sir Ralph will not spend money in investigating Edmund's claims, but if Tom can find any profit accruing for it he shall have a share. It was not the only occasion that Tom traded on his younger brother's fair fame; a letter of Mary Lloyd's to Dr. Denton describes how he turned up some years later in Chester Cathedral.

'Honour'd Uncle,—Sr now I will acquainte you with that as was the greatest of newes to mee: last Sunday being att the quire who did I see but my brother Tom Verney, and could not satisfy my selfe whether I was not mistaken but after long view I found him to be the same; he came from Scotland to a Chester Merchant about some Mynes that he would be a partaker of, and returned on Monday, he is in a good equipage & his man to waite on him, & looks well and lusty, but the same Tom V. for a plodding Braine & building Castells in the Ayre: the Gentlemen are very respectfull & oblidging to him, for my Brother Sr Edm'd was Governor of the Castle, & they honour & respect the name still.'

March 18,
1675.

Whatever time and thought Dr. Denton could spare from his patients were divided between his girl, who kept the house alive with her merry tongue, and a ponderous theological treatise which years of labour had rendered little less dear to him than Nancy herself. This charming and saucy damsel, though she did not marry till her twenty-fourth year, had had many suitors from childhood. In 1662 her father was in treaty with a Mr. Barker; the settlements on each side promised well, the father was 'in hearty good earnest,' but Doctor feared that 'there was a pad in the straw as to the sow,' and being 'in a great quandary' he appealed to Sir Ralph, having 'no one to consult withall but women.'

Nancy was meanwhile making plans on her own account. Strong in her position as the spoilt child of the family, and absolutely confident of being able to do what she chose with

her father and godfather, she received the addresses of a Mr. Ford, who, disregarding all the proprieties of the period, had approached her without her father's knowledge. But for once 'Mistress Monkey' was startled to find she had reached the end of her tether. Neither tears nor coaxing were of the least avail, and a good deal alarmed and sobered, Nancy wrote—not unassisted—the following remarkable epistle to her suitor, a copy of which was kept by the authorities she had defied. The phrase about her father must have been all her own—imagination fails to picture the Doctor, with his dry humour and professional calmness, as 'implacably enraged'—Nancy evidently wanted to cover her retreat.

MAY 19,
1662.

'Sir,—As I have been obliged to you for your value, and kindnesse to mee, soe I must begg this farther obligation from you, as to lay a side all thoughts of farther kindnesse, or addresses to mee, for that uppon the presumption of my Fathers greate love for mee, I made it knowne to him. . . . but the truth is, instead of procuring his consent I finde him soe implacably enraged & soe absolutely peremptory in the deniall, that there is noe possibility or hopes, ever soe much as to thinke of it. . . . I am very well assured that if I should bee soe unhappy soe to marry, hee would never give mee any thing of his estate liveing or dying, or ever see my face agayne, and therfore being obliged by the Law of God and nature to him, and my owne happinesse to comply with him in this his resolution, I doe earnestly desire you to thinke noe more of it, for I shall not on any account whatsoever, and soe I rest, Your servant, Annie Denton.'

In the winter of 1663, a more interesting alliance was arranged for Mistress Nancy with George Nicholas, a younger son of the old Secretary of State. Sir Edward Nicholas represented the best traditions of the Cavaliers; 'entering official life early, he had risen to its highest grade by proved capacity for business and knowledge of affairs';¹ he was now an old man, and had just retired from 'his

great office,' refusing a peerage, but continuing to serve his Majesty on the Privy Council

At Christmas time Mrs Dr. Denton was already busily planning the wedding feast. Was there a fat doe at Claydon, or could one be fatted at short notice? she inquired of Sir Ralph. Margaret Elmes, whose taste and cleverness are universally acknowledged, has come up to Covent Garden, and the ladies 'are now every day mity busy about the wedding clothes, 100*l.* is already gon with them and a considerable som moare will be laid out about them, it cannot be tolerably dun with less.'

Dame Jane Nicholas, to whom Nancy has already lost her heart, pays a ceremonious visit to good vulgar Mrs. Denton. Aunt Isham hears 'that the man is without Excepchon, & that is the thinge I am pleased att for all the forting is loc, one is not always hapye with a greate fortune.' But though the women's part of the business was in so forward a state, there were rumours that the Doctor was yet to satisfy about the settlements.

The Nicholas family suffered severely in the distracted times; the bridegroom's grandfather had been 'plundered thrice in one week'; his uncle, the Dean of Bristol, was turned out of house and home; 'his wife, poor gentlewoman, pitied by all, tho' not holpen by any,' was reduced to sending her only maid into the market-place, 'selling rosemary & bayes to buy bread'; nor did Mr. Secretary Nicholas fare better. Since the Restoration the family fortunes had revived a litle; the young Sir John Nicholas held his father's old post of Clerk to the Privy Council, but no large portion could be given to George, the youngest of three sons. Sir John Nicholas sought an introduction to Sir Ralph from a mutual friend Charles Whitaker, that he might not, on his brother's behalf, 'come solitary in the quality of a stranger, which hee is purely, to his great unhappinesse.' Sir Edward Nicholas eventually surrendered to his son George the benefit 'of one 4th part of the office of Surveyor Generall of his Majestie's Customs, as well as his estate, title and interest in the parsonage of Wherwell in the County of Southampton,' and

Feb 16,
1664.

Dr. Denton settled land on his daughter yielding a clear rental of 100*l* a year. The matter was apparently settled, when an agitated note from Nancy reached her kind old friend. 'If you could possibly for your business com hethar, you wold oblige me mutch, for now my fathar is as hard to be perswaded to anything as my mother is.' Sir Ralph did not fail his young kinswoman, the marriage took place two days later, and after the honeymoon the bride writes to him in a rapture of gratitude. 'Deare Parant, this titell coms not to you unmerited for I know of no one that has more wright to it then yourselfe. . . . God Almighty reward you for your peas-making betwen fathar & child for next under God you ware the means of it. . . . I shall beg your pardon & ever remain Your dutyfull child & best girle still, Anne Nicholas'

Sir Edward and Lady Nicholas offered bed and board to the young couple for the first months, and Nancy speaks of them with extreme affection. The Doctor is more than reconciled to his son-in-law, and in the autumn they 'are gon to the Fens and so intend for a ramble.' 'My fathar and Nike are both run a wae I think,' Nancy writes to Sir Ralph, 'for they are not com home yet but they have almost destroyed your manor of Cladon, & Nobill Soul [Edmund] has uesed them as I hear very kindly.' Her health requires care, and old Aunt Abercromby 'has mounted the gard a fortnight sence. My mother is in ill cais, seing my fathar stais so long a wae, & sais she shall nevar be well, but I hope in that she speaks not truth. The town is empty & barin of newes & I as dull for want of my Nike. . . . There is a Giant come out of Holond and he is 9 fut hy & 2 inches. I beleve my poor Nike wold stand betwen his legs, he has sutch long ones. . . . I will now tiar you no longer, only ask you an evning blessing, & rest as you shall ever find me your truly loving cosin and best Child.'

In Christmas week both families rejoice over the birth of 'a lusty boy,' christened Denton, who is prosperous, 'even to a mirekell,' according to his mother's account. 'My boy is now undressing by me,' she writes, when the treasure is

just able to toddle, 'and is sutch prety companey that he hindars me so, I cannot write what I wold.'

The other children born to George and Nancy Nicholas were Jane (b. 1666), a son who died an infant in 1670, and John (b. 1674). Denton Nicholas was at Trinity College, Oxford, with Mun Verney's eldest son; he became a Doctor, and died in 1714. Jane, called after her Nicholas grandmother, was Sir Ralph's godchild. Nancy writes to thank him for 'making a cristian of my litill girle who I will indevar to make as duty full to you as myselfe am.'

May 10,
1666

Jane's marriage to Sir John Abdy is told in a later chapter; when her daughter was born, nothing would satisfy Lady Abdy but that Sir Ralph should stand sponsor, as he had stood for the baby's mother and grandmother. He was flattered by the request, being wont to boast that his godchildren 'were alwaies the best of the Brood, witnesse Nancy Nicholas.' Dr Denton lived to be godfather to his great-grandson, afterwards Sir Robert Abdy. Nancy's youngest son Jack had Bishop Patrick for his godfather; he was educated at Harrow, took Holy Orders in 1701, married in 1706 'the dau. of Parson Dod,' and left a son George. These grandchildren and great grandchildren were the joy of the Doctor's old age, and after his wife's death in 1675 the Nicholases made their home with him in Covent Garden.

Other matrons gauged rather enviously Mistress Nancy's popularity by the amount of venison she received in presents. 'I dar say,' one lady remarks, 'fue as has parkes of ther one, has so much spent in ther house as my Cossen Nicholas eats, for as she tells me, she eats it as others eat beaf, three tims A week, baked, boyled, rosted and potted.' Sir Ralph sends her snipes and larks. 'My Nike,' she writes, 'was y^t afternoon gone to bed wth a cold and the exstrordinary goodnes of ye fousls tempted him up again to supper. . . . I never did see firmer or fresher or fatter.' She is delightfully young as a mother and grandmother, and expects to go everywhere and see everything. 'Nancy hath beene at the Tower,' the old Doctor writes after one of these excursions,

April 23,
1680.

' & was afraid when she saw the men in armour, & durst not see the Lyons.' An introduction to her brings a girl into the best society. 'Sr Petter Lily told me tonight y^t now his Dafter was at home wth him, & he beged y^e favor of me to lett her come often to my house y^t se might se something of y^e world w^h I was very redy to imbrace & told him I would also bring her a Quainted wth Lady Gardiner's Daughters. . . . I am as tru freind to y^m young creturs as aney in y^e world can be so I have spoken to Cous. Cary to cary y^e young lass to y^e Park & so this will make an a Quaintance wth y^e father & the young women.'

But to return to the year 1664, Nancy's marriage being off his mind, the Doctor gave himself up with keen relish to his defence of Protestant opinions, and this same year his 'Horæ Subsecivæ' was published. He thus sets forth his intentions—'A sad fate attends both him that writes and him that writes not. He that Prints exposeth himself to be wounded by others, and he that forbears to Speak or Print in the cause of God, provokes God to disown him.' The Doctor has persuaded himself that in a century of controversy, the 'just defence of England against Rome, the Innocency of our Princes and their Government and of the Protestant religion, has never yet been particularly handled in any particular Tract that ever yet I could see and hear of, which I hope may excuse me A tanto if not A toto.' Arming himself with a goodly store of biblical texts and classical quotations, the Doctor descended into the dusty arena, belabouring Popes, Cardinals, and Councils, 'rightly expounding things generally misunderstood,' and in the heat of the fray losing the sense of humour, the delicate irony, and the felicity of expression which make his private letters so delightful. He published a translation of 'Fra Paolo, dedicated to his Majestye' which he had 'the bold imprudence to present to the K. & the Duke.' He continued to prescribe for 'Ecclesiastics of all Perswasions,' to purge out heresies, and to devise robust tonics for weak faith, feeling no scruple in dogmatising about the soul's ailments, though he

had often confessed to the difficulty of treating those of the body.

In the beginning of 1665 Dorothy Leeke's health began to fail. She was an instance of an old maid who is the good angel of a whole family. Her warm heart, unaffected piety, and cheerful spirits, unbroken by poverty and dependence, made her welcome in every household.

Lady Gawdy treated her as a sister, and whenever she could be spared from Croweshall, she was overwhelmed with invitations from friends and relations, but divided her time chiefly between Chancery Lane and Claydon. She never lost an opportunity of serving Sir Ralph, and when Sir Charles Gawdy sends over a groom to Claydon, he is sure to have a merry letter from Doll in his wallet. 'Dear Sir Ralph,' she writes on one of these occasions, 'you beleve your self now at liberty & fre from all troublesome parsons, but this is to let you see that you ought not to be very Confident of any thing in this world, for in all places I shall find you out to torment you, yet my thoughts are so free from malis, that I wish this may only hinder you of a quater of an hower slep in the Evining; not when you are in your park amoungst your prety dear, Nancy atinding you; nor in your fine wood & walks, for ther I will a low you to think of the last beauty you saw at Loundon. By this time I beleve you wish to come to the bisnis that caused this leter, but to tell you the truth I have none, nor anything more to say, but that I could be contented to be in Sir Charleses boy's plac the time he is at Cladon, if you wold admit me into the parlur, but then or hear I can never be other then your most faithfull servant to Comand.'

Edmund welcomed her very cordially at East Claydon, where she took Luce Sheppard's place in helping Mary with housekeeping, and in encouraging her to occupy herself in various directions. At the White House she is to 'lay over the Hall because the inward room is so convenient for her Mad,' 'dans la chambre sur la sale, mais non pas dans une sale chambre,' Mun writos; 'she eats no flesh on Fridays nor

willingly on Wednesdays in Lent' Mary is hard at work embroidering the hangings for a big green bed, Doll busies herself with sorting silks and crewels, she sends patterns to Sir Ralph and Aunt Elmes to be matched in London, and helps Mary with the intricacies of the 'rosemary stitch.' Mary likes her task very well, but Doll considers 'ther is too much work in it, and ther is sertain birds and flyes and other creepers which I know not, and frute which I do not much like, but it is a very fine thing, tho they be Left out Gamboy, Marigold and Vaunter [Sir Ralph's hounds] made us a visit which was all the strangers we had.'

In the midst of her unselfish ministrations, this kind woman first began to suspect the real nature of the 'dangerous corroding disease' from which she was suffering. The shock and the increasing pain upset her for the time, the more so as 'Doctor's physicke' failed entirely to check its progress. He is 'much concerned for Doll who, I feare, hath a very ill back & will be like her mother.' She rallied bravely from her depression, kept her sufferings to herself as far as might be, and as the year wore on, private anxieties were merged in a great public calamity.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE PLAGUE AND THE FIRE.

1665-1666.

THE plague so often referred to in the earlier Verney letters had been for many years in abeyance. 'During the Civil Wars London had been the safest place of residence and had grown fast while other towns were languishing.'

The fresh outbreak in the spring of 1665 is noticed at first merely in joke: 'Tis plaguey newes that the plague has come to Southwark.' In May Sir Ralph writes from Chancery Lane: 'Tis an ill time to put out money for the feare of the Plague makes many willing to take their Estates out of the Goldsmiths' hands, & the King's greate want of money makes many very unwilling to lend any money to these that advance greate summs for him. M^r Kenpe came to my Lodging on purpose to desire mee to helpe him to dispose 3 or 400*l*. on good security. . . . Coals [which come by sea from Newcastle] are not only excessive deare, but are not to be had, wec heare of a hope for greate Fleets hereafter, but we doubt tis but discourse.' He is thankful to have the Claydon woods to fall baek upon, but must cut down more timber than he desires. It is a hot and dry season, and Mun must see that the young mulberry trees are well watered May 18,
1665.

The plague is spreading; in June 'tis suspected to bee at the Black Swan in Holborn where the Alisbery & other coaches stand'; a little later all the carriers are stopped, 'the sickness is not far from Lombard St. & if it should visitt the Goldsmiths twill be hazardous to have too great a stock there.' Sir Roger Burgoyne, whose children are at

Clapham, is afraid either to leave them there or to have them home; but eventually they return to Warwickshire, Sir Ralph entertaining them by the way, Sir Roger has received them 'safe & sound, but so full of the good dainties that Claydon afforded, that the best we have at Wroxall will hardly goe down with them'

June 19,
1665.

Aunt Isham exhorts Sir Ralph while he is in town 'to ware a quill as is filed up with quicksilver and sealed up with hard waxe & soed up in a silke thinge with a string to ware about your neck, this is as sartine as any thinge is to keep one from taking of the Plage if one is in the house with them . . . iff you let your Horse ware it about his head he will never have the desese. This is a slite bisnes if itt does presarve one from this sad desese, as the Lady Bemone tells me she hath worn it herselfe & intends to have some for all her sarvants, & Sir Tho: Bemone hunted with his nabores Hounes as thare Horses ware infected & his horse never choed the desese . . . heare is talkes of one as came from London within 5 miles is dead of a swelling under his yeare.' 'The quicksilver must be corked up fust & then seled, itt tis nitty for one's teth & eies, so without one is in danger one would not ware itt.' She recommends him to have 'Lente figges in a readines if any of your family shoulge have a swelling, Rost some & Mashe them togeather & then mix some Meatreadat¹ amongst them nothing will soner brake & hele a sore then this, so thay keepe them selves warme.'

June 27,
1665

She has also a cure for the falling sickness given her by 'Lady Shinjane as a thing as never failed. Take the misseltoe wh^{ch} growes sometimes upon the top, & sometimes among the branches of an old oake tree, dry it & beat it to powder & Give as much of it as will lye upon a sixpence, 3 mornings together.' Cary Gardiner has her nostrum, 'a blak meddiciu' so potent she would certainly cure the plague could she get enough of it. The official remedy is garlic with butter and a clove or two; and for 'the richer sort,' the College of Physicians prescribe a costly concoction of 'Powder of hartshorn, pearls, coral, tormentil, hyacinth-

¹ Mithridate mustard, *Phlaspe arvensis*.

stone, onyx-stone & East Hunicorne's horn.' Hampshire is much infected; the Duke of York's children are at Wilton, and expect him to join them there.

The men of Sir Ralph's generation still considered smoking a nasty habit, and Sir Roger Burgoyne, in planning a new wing at Wroxall, designs a door into the Oval Garden 'to make it serve instead of a withdrawing room for tobaccoists & such goodfellows & to free the house from all such unwellcome perfumes.' But it was rapidly becoming fashionable, as a preservative against infection, and the Eton boys were ordered to smoke in school daily.

Sir Ralph has to confess 'the Sicknesse is strangely increased & that several houses are shut upp in Chancery lane & severall neare it, but I trust God in Mercy will preserve mee & this family from that violent disease. I have been ill of late, soe that the Dr. hath purged & blooded me, & now I hope to get home within few days.' Hospitable as he is, he is disinclined to share his home with some relations for an indefinite period, which rouses Penelope and Henry to wrath. She protests that she would be content with 'a thached hous in your town': and he writes, 'If you had had but a sparke of love for me, you would not a putt these greate inconveniences on mee . . . all people are so fearofull of the sickness that they will recive non, much less people thay know not. If my sister Gardiner considers not our condition noe better then you have don, then I shall enter your house on our retorne & putt a redd cross on the dore and write & cry Lord a marcy on us.' Henry's 'errand' is said to be to 'a cocking at Northampton.'

July 4
1665.

Mrs. Elmes, always nervous about health, has fled to Scarborough and thence to Knaresborough Spa, in company with the Ishams, the Sherards, and 'my shee-cousin Danby.' She writes to her brother: 'The first inst we arived att the nasty Spaw, and have now began to drinke the horid sulfer watter, which all thowgh as bad as is posable to be im-majaned, yet in my judgment plesant, to all the doings we have within doorse, the house and all that is in it being horidly nasty and crowded up with all sorte of company,

June 4,
1665.

which we Eate with in a roome as the spiders are redy to drope into my mouth, and sure hath the nether been well cleaned nor ared this doseuen yerese, it makes me much moare sicke then the rusty water Did you but see me you wolde laugh hartily att me, but I say little of it to whot I thinke, then to mend all this the goe to supper att halfe an ower after six, soe I save a bitt and supp bye myselfe 2 owers after them, which is the plesantest thinge I doe heare. We are 16 of my uncle and aunts family, and all in pention, att 10s a weeke for owerselves, and 7s. for ovr servants with lodgens in ; I have not hard from you I know not when, soe in my openyone live heare as if theare ware nobody Elce in the worlde, but just whot I see of these bumkins. We met the Lady Comton and her sister the Lady Ann Comton att Donkister, hoe asured me the blackimorse head in Chancery iaine was shutt up of the plaige.' The health resorts leave much to be desired. Lodgings at Astropp Wells which Mrs. Elmes also visited were as objectionable ; 'instead of the sweet woodbines and jesamine att Claydon, I have the stincke of sower whay & cheese, which is so strong in my chamber I know not whot to doe . . not a coale of fyer can I get to burne one smale bitt of perfewme, fast I must the night, heare not being ather master or maide att home, candle there is not a bit, soe I have sent to borrow one.' The accomodation at Buxton seems to have been no better.

June 5,
1665.

Sir Ralph had been meditating how to give his sister 'some imployment at Knarsborough-Spa, and can finde out none but to search for Haire to make me Wiggs & buy your coach full, if you can, for all sorts of comodities are cheape in Yorkshaire & generally very good too . . . Peg Gardner saw your Lord & Master with some gentlemen in the Parke, where I doubt not your company was much desired. I am told Sir John Dynham's Lady & fine Mrs. Middleton are sworne the Queene's Dressers, if it be soe, she hath six, had you been heare perhaps you might have been the 7th . . . Give my Aunt humble thanks for her letter [inviting Sir Ralph to join them], truly now you are with her, I thought

one of the Brood had been enough at a time, but if the waters make her soe well as to support Two, twill bee a very greate recovery, that gives both strength to her, & happinesse to me.' Peg can hear of no hair at any barber's; she writes from York, lodgings are dearer than in London: 'this town doth almost swarme, ther being soldiers, soe men we want not . . . nethor my aunt nor selfe have had any violent paine in our heads so I hope the waters have dun us good, but now we are beginning our gretist punnishments which is our phosicke.' Sir Ralph is glad she is 'in soe good company at Yorke for it seems there is greate store of gentlemen there, and we know you ladies love them, noe lesse then we doe the ladies. . . . I beleeve you have had abundance of Cherries, Reygrasse & all such kinde of Dainties; much good may they doe you, but I pray eate sparingly.'

June 19
1665

Aunt Isham writes from Stapleford, my Lord Sherard's house: 'We are as merry heare as one can be so far from London & the Lady Sherard with myself hath beaten one Lady Beamon out of the Pitt att ha'penny Gleeke you may think how itt hath weared me play this small game.'

The rest of the party are at Thorpe with Margaret Danby (*née* Eure). Her married life was not a happy one; her husband suffered from the masterful temper against which her mother used to rebel, and she was constantly at war with her sister and Mr. Palmes. Peg Elmes complains to Sir Ralph that when she reached their house 'the Chiefe Bird was flone 2 dayes befoare, he knowing of our coming, his brother and sister he tooke away with him, soe lefte none heare but the childeren, his wife being with us most of the time we have been in these parts. This showse whot good well umored creturs you men are. . . . This plaise will cost me somthing, heare being a man Cooke, butler and all ofisers ansortable.' Peg went home with Mrs. Sherard to Whitsondine, passing through York. No inns were considered safe in the plague time, and 'to lye att Gentlemens Houses as we go will cost me I know not whot,' writes this

July 18
1665

careful lady. Mrs. Sherard is said to look seven years younger after her course of waters.

Betty Adams at Great Baddow contributes her tale of the plague in Essex; Chelmsford is infected by the many 'hecklers' that come thither from town 'my Cusan Pascal saies when aney great sicknes is at London it is yousaley ther, it is all redy much visited with the smol pox, that desese has much rained in this Contrie since I cam hether, my next neibors daur diel of it . . . our carrier has left going to London, but the post I thinck goes still.'

Aug. 27,
1665.

In August, Buckingham 'is soe sorely afflicted with Small Pox, suspected to be worse for there are blew spots with it,' that Sir Ralph is advised to send to Bicester Market; Edmund cannot deal with his butcher at Winslow because the butcher's man, Hogson, comes from an infected house; Squire Duncombe 'pensa mourir ce matin, et cette après diner il alla au Cabaret se boire bien.' Hogson's sister dies, and the plague spreads to their relations at East Claydon, where Edward Cox and all his children die of it, the wife alone recovering, and falling ill later, after the birth of her posthumous child, of what is again supposed to be the plague. Edmund remains at his post, and Sir Ralph returns to Claydon as soon as the plague breaks out, that they may do what they can for the villages; it does not spread in the Claydons, but through that terrible September when the mortality in London reached its highest point, there were plague-cases at Stowe, Stony Stratford, Fenny Stratford (where the market was closed and the highway diverted), Bletchley, Lavendon (where fifty died in the village), Winslow, Hardwick, Aylesbury, Wendover, Marlow, Wycombe, etc. A wandering dog was said to have carried the plague from Wendover to Ellesborough, where the Rector, Thomas Emery, died of it. A pest-house was set up in the fields outside Aylesbury, whose wretched inmates burnt 'the sheep-racks & gates' of the adjoining farm, being forbidden to wander in search of fuel. The Aylesbury Gaol, 'so decayed that it was scarce fit for a dog-house,' had long been a centre of infection; at this time

it was crammed full of miserable Quakers and Nonconformists.

Men hardly dared to leave their homes for fear of bringing 'the sickness' back with them. Thomas Stafford speaks 'of the sad confinement of all fathers of families in this time of contagion.' In Hampshire, Cary deplotes the fate of a poor family three miles from her own door, where the plague was brought down by a brother from London, and all died of it; for two months past there have been fifty deaths a week in Southampton.

Court, Parliament, and the Law fled to Oxford; the Chancellor with my Lord Manchester is taking orders for the King's accommodation there. Sir Nathaniel Hobart writes to Sir Ralph: 'If the Plague continue at the rate I feare it will, what a madnes would it bee to have such a confluence of people as the Terme must bring into such a place as Oxford, but in regard we are uncertaine what will bee resolvde on by them that sit at the Sterne, our humble request is that you will bee pleased to use your interest to procure us lodgings, a lower and an upper chamber would bee sufficient. . . . S^t if they can be had neere the Schooles where they say the Court will bee kept it will bee the better but beggars must bee noe chusers.'

Lady Hobart is ready to disregard all sanitary considerations if she can but be with her 'Nat.' 'There goo non but my husband self and Mayd and man and it may be my boy. One rom for us and a plas for my hus to sit in, but tou roms shall sarve all we will mack shift . . . my son dislicks that the new Colag shall send to ofer him logins for he will mack no requist to them . . . my husband writ a leter to docker Bate to see if he cold help him, but my son says the toun Logins are so dear that thar is no deling with them. I hop we shall see you to morow or the next day for I have no pashans to be so long from you, I wold be glad to have a lon rom for my husband any shall content us.'

Sir Ralph lays the case before his Oxford friends. The Principal of Brasenose, Dr. Thomas Yate, hospitably responds: 'Sir,—I have had Sr Nath. Hobart's name in my

Sept 12,
1665.

Sept 12,
1665.

Sept. 21,
1665.

list, ever since mr Cary told me your desires for him, and I hope I shalbe able to serve him as you desire, with a lodging chamber and another chamber below staires, if those that now take upon them all power here doe not attempt to doe more then hithertoo they have done, Mr Attorney Gen: lies in my lodgings, and hath desired me to provide for his two sonnes [one or both members of Parliamēt] some where also in our Coll: I have designed where to lodge Sr Nath and I hope I shall hold it, I will not easily be beaten off, though I had a ticket this morning from my Lord Chancellor's Secretary to desire I would provide for 4 knightes but I hope it is but a thing he assumes, and that it is not by my Lord's Command. But be assured I will use all the power and friendes I have, but I will have a lodging such as you desire for him, but what his servantes will doe I cannot at present tell you, though I will thinke myselfe obliged to do all I can in some place or other to fitt them also. Wee heare the Duke of Yorke wilbe here to morrow, his children came on Thursday last, and though some cariages of the kinges are come already to Christ Church, wee are not assured the king wilbe here on Tuesday next, but most say that Ev^e he wilbe here. The great trouble Sr Nath. Hobart wilbe put into wilbe for his diet in a Colledge if his lady comes along with him: otherwise those that are members of the House have names in the Booke, and dine and sup in our Hall, wch they seeme to be pleased with, but wherein I may serve them therein also I shall, and if Sr Nath. Hobart could give me notice 2 or 3 dayes before his coming I might be enabled to serve him the better, that he might not be to seeke when he comes, as many maybe (for the Court hath so enlarged themselves having Christ Church, Merton Coll: Corpus Xti Coll. Pembroke Coll. & Oriol Coll. assigned wholly and solely for them) that it putts many to straites and many to seeke, for if I provide for Sr Nath (as I hope to do) in our Coll. I must remove a fellow and some furniture and they must have some tyme to doe it. I heare my Lo. Chancelor wilbe here on Munday, and in all likelihood mr Cary may be here then

also and wee will joyne all our force together to serve you. My Wife presentes her most humble service and thankses to you, and will not be wanting in any thing shee is able to serve you herein.' Sir Nathaniel writes—'For my diet I shall be glad to eat in the Hall if that may bee allowed, for my wife, though she would be glad to eat with the Dr's wife, and her mayde at her servants table, yet least that should be an inconvenience to her, she saies (and you know she can shift) she will do it privately in her chamber.'

'I have sent you both this weeks gazettes,' he writes again, 'and have nothing to add but a comicall encounter betwixt my lord of Lyncolne and Secretary Maurice at the Secretaries owne table, the dispute grew about the Antiquity of the two Universities. My Lord of Lincolne (as he had reason) was for Cambridge, Mr Sec: for Oxford, Sir Robert Wiseman who was present protested he thought they would have gone to Cuffs, certainly it would have bin an excellent decision of that great controversy had they engagde and Cambridge in all likelihood had got the Victory, for my Lord, who you know is a little out of temper by fits, would have made madd worke with my little Statesman.'

Mrs. Sherard writes from Whitsondine: 'I am in a daily fere, we had a market town about 4 miles of us that bureyed about 9 or 10 in a hut, just as I cam ought of the North, and wee hoped all would have bin well, but about 3 wickes since it brake out in that town affresh and non knows how it cam. A child of 3 years old dyed first, and 5 more since in that same hous, and it was in one hous more which sold all sortes of ale; he conselid his dead wife tow dayes, and ther was 40 in the hous after shee dyed both Jhentry and others, my L^d Sherard told me that non in his hundred could say thay wair free, & severall of that town stole into our town & brought in ther Goodes in the night. My hus. hearing of it armd himselfe with his pistoles & went about 9 at night & saw them all shut up with thos as resived them; it is a great blesing that all plasis air not infectked considoring the carlysness of the common sort of people.' Six months later the plague is still in 'the market town' and likely to

Nov 24,
1665

Oct 8,
1665.

last through another summer, 'the town being full of poore & very unruly.' Sir Justinian Isham is driven from home, the sickness being all round his house in Northamptonshire

Oct. 23,
1665.

Betty's fears are confirmed: 'The sickness is at Chelmsford a litel mile from me which coseis me to be veri fearfull, so many of our town goes that way to Markit, thos which bee shut up would run About did not sum stand with guns redy to shoot them if they stur.' By December there are fifty houses infected, she is the 'joyful mother of a fin girl,' thankful for her recovery 'in times when wee hardly dare visit one another if sick.' As soon as she can sit up in her hed she writes to Sir Ralph a list of benefices he might apply for. As Tom had found balm in the thought that creditors were not plague-proof; and Jeffereys, a lad in his teens, profiting by the havoc the plague had wrought among the lawyers, 'put a gown on his back & began to plead' before he had been called to the bar; so Betty reading with some complacency of the 'many ministers dead in thees times of Mortolity,' thinks it strange indeed if her brother cannot get them one of the vacant livings; 'the taxis here is so hi & the plas so smol that we know not whot to doo, this with my praiers to God for our hapy meeting I rest that am Y^r most affect^d Sister & sarvant.'

Oxford, crowded as it is in every corner, is not exempt—'the porter of Lincoln is dead of the plague,' and other cases are mentioned; the saintly Bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Earle, is dying in University College, but of what illness does not appear.

Nov. 1665.

Dr. Yate continues to be overdone with guests; Major Salway, Governor of Ireland under Cromwell and later Ambassador to Constantinople, is coming to the College. The Hobarts seem to have found lodgings in the town, as poor Doll Leeke is with them. Sir Ralph sends her a bed and bedding from Claydon; and a warming-pan, wrapped up in a feather bed, is to arrive on horseback. Sir Roger Burgoyne writes of a 'man of miracles, the 7th brother who opens the eyes of those that have been

blind many yeares, and cures cancers in breast which he seldom failes in,' but Doll is happily left in peace. She returns to Lady Smith's house at Radcliffe and gets 'some ingredients for a dyet drink from Mr. Gape, and some frog water from Oxford.' She is still well enough to write to Sir Ralph: 'I thank God I got very well home but weary and much worst then when I went, my pains are like to increas every day, I pray I may get pacience to induer and that my time may not be long. . . . I have 3 score of suger for you but can get no basket to put it in. Sir, so long as I have ability you shall have a very faithful servant of your D. Leake.' A week later she writes again: Sir W. Smith 'would drive me over to Claydon but I grow every day more unfit for such a Journey . . . all that I shall beg of you or any of my friends is to pray for me that it will pleas God to make me fit for him, the great blessing I can expect is to dy, O that I wear so happy that the time wear come, but I must wait his Leasure that must mak me fit for it.' Sir Ralph writes of 'my deare Clozen Leake' to Lady Gawdy, who is tenderly anxious about her—'though she walkes about the house, yet I may say many and greate Paines and a lingering Death with a thousand other inconveniencies are visible uppon her. . . . I beleeve she conceales the worst from you, well knowing how sensible your Ladyshipp would bee of her distresses.' Nov. 1665
Nov. 8,
1665
Dec. 2,
1665.

Sir Ralph and Edmund rode over constantly from Claydon, and were lovingly on the watch to devise any alleviations. Lady Hobart came down again from town: 'I would render my life to do her good, never any Sister had such a Los as she will be to me.' Dr. Denton sees her at intervals and she has a crowd of visitors; Mun goes over with a party just before Christmas: 'pour ce qui touche ma surpassante Cousine Leake, ma plume ne peut vous raconter sans larmes ceque mes yeux on vu, une ame si pure et si sainte dans un corps tellement corrompu.'

A few days later Mun rides over again to Radcliffe and returns by moonlight, deeply impressed with the 'magnanimity & truly Christian patience' with which the sufferer

Jan. 15,
1666.

bears herself. Sir Ralph is at Wroxall, where Sir Roger had promised to use him like a friend; 'Hempen sheets, Bull Beefe & the worst room in my house shall be all at your service, my wife will provide the softest cushions she can get for your lean bones, I know you love an easy seat as well as hard fare.' He has hurt his shin and tries to 'favour it,' having found 'that rest is a great advantage to it,' but he is far too active to be prudent long, and Doll is asking daily for his return. Sir Ralph does not think her so near death as Lady Hobart does, 'this terrible disease commonly takes time & leasure in its execution. You see the Queen Mother of France lives still, though her very Doctors have oft expected her departure.' Mr. Butterfield finds 'Mistress Leake wearing a pace but not so fast as she desires.' Peg Elmes hopes 'God may comfort her & keep us from the like,' and deplores in the same breath the death of Sir Ralph's ass, whose milk she designed to share with him. She is staying with Sir Thomas Cave at Stanford, paying for her diet. Penelope Lady Cave (*nee* Wenman) dies in February, and there is instantly a panic in the country that it is 'the plague, or spotted fever at the best.' Lady Elmes and Arabella Denton have nursed her to the last, and Sir Thomas gives them mourning. Sir Ralph says that malignant fevers are always worse in a time of plague, and advises his sister 'to finde out some private place to air yourself a little to take off all apprehension' before coming to Claydon, though it seems that the illness is 'only Scarlet Fever.' 'The Plague is newly brake out againe at Quanton & 2 more dead of it already this week . . . I pray bee not affrayd, for foare brings many diseases.' Doll signs a paper on the 14th of February leaving her little savings to her sister, and on the 22nd Sir Ralph, just starting for the Assizes, writes a hurried line to Henry: 'My deare Cozen Leake is gon to Heaven, & is, & will bee very much missed by all that knew her.' 'As fit for Heaven as Cousin Leake' is the family phrase for a saintly woman.

Feb. 22,
1666 .

Mrs. Elmes remains at Stanford helping Sir Thomas Cave with his motherless children: 'he is continewally a

weeping as if it were all most the first day he had lost his lady', she cannot but contrast his conduct with that of her own Sir Thomas, 'who is displeased att my being here, & trewly I am confident will bee soe with all I doe or where ere I am, till he heares I am in my grave, which newse I hope in God he shall not have a longe time.' Sir Greville Verney is staying in the house, on the occasion of one of her visits. 'I cannot say he courts any here, so as to make me thinke he will make his choyse here,' she writes to Sir Ralph, 'tho' he doth make a party color Cortshipp to one moare then the rest; which you men are not much to be minded for.'

Pepys could rejoice with the opening of the New Year at the plague's decrease in town; shops were opening, porters bowing and beggars begging at the sight of a nobleman's coach come to town again, but in many parts of the country the sickness raged all that year. Cary writes that Winchester was 'never near so bad as now, ther died 11 in one day, for all the town is emptied so much into the countary a bout; poor Milly, the pretty made as sarved my daughter Grove, is shut up and her husband and 3 children, last tusday her made dying of the plag, so my littell scolar is like to continue with mee who presents his humble sarvis to you tis a sad los of time to him. In Southampton, I thinke, have died almost 1000.' Winton College remains closed for above half a year; 'so that for that time,' writes John Stewkeley, 'I have been Jack's Tutor; after Xmas the school opens again, if the sickness doe not breake out again which is much feared, by reason that one fell down dead there last week, as he was going to grinde mault'

June 25,
1666

Bad news of the war with the Dutch contributes to the general depression: 'Hear is nothing bot sending soulgars to sea,' Cary writes, 'and lending mony to the King, and I wish wee ware in so good a condistion as that wee could doc it as will as others to sarve the King.'

June 15,
1666.

There are riots amongst the plague-stricken wretches who are shut up in their houses; the plague is still 'so violent in Winton and Petersfeld and Porchmouth as tis

July 23,
1666.

sad to relate, and last week the sick brok out, not for want, as wee are told, but to visitt the houses of the better sort and opened the jale and 17 prisoners escaped, bot 15 are taken againe, the royal white trained bands ware left in town and soprist thim with the lose of one man and 3 hort, of that party as did mutiny, wee are afraid of all wee meet thay ramble a bout . . . our assises is kept next wensday at Andovour so the Sherrif is come into this sickly countary how long to stay I know not, I pray God send peac and helth.'

Aug. 13
1666.

In August 'Winton is as bad as evar considering the small nomber remaining in it and so is Petersfeild, bot Porchmouth though many sick in it tis not now so mortall, wee take the same way in this countary as you due by a woeckly tax, and so wee did last yeare besids what is sent in by privet gentlemen which hath bin very considerable tho' all to littell for wee heare thay are in want still.' 'We have had a year of scarcity.'

Sept. 3,
1666.

A more terrible blow than any that had yet fallen was to 'crush the weak fortunes' of the Stewkeleys, and of many other members of the family, whose incomes depended on London property. Lady Hobart, in her beautiful house in Chancery Lane, writes in an agony of fear, while the Great Fire is blazing: 'O dear Sir Raph,—I am sory to be the mesinger of so dismall news, for por London is almost burnt down. It began on Saterdag night [she is writing Monday morning] & has burnt ever sene and is at this tim more fears then ever, it did begin in pudding lan at a backers, whar a Duch rog [rogue] lay, & burnt to the bridge & all fish street and all crasus stret & Lumber Stret and the old exchang & canan stret & so all that way to the reaver & bilingsgat sid, & now tis com to chop sid & banescasell [Baynard's Castle, to the east of Blackfriars Bridge] & tis thought flet stret will be burnt by tomorow, thar is nothing left in any hous thar, nor in the Tempell, thar was never so sad a sight, nor so dolefull a cry hard, my hart is not abell to expres the tenth nay the thousenth part of it, thar is all the carts within ten mils round, & cars & drays

run about night & day, & thousens of men & women carrying burdens. Tis the Duch fire, thar was one tacken in Westminster seting his outhous on fier & thay have atempted to fier many plases & thar is a bundanc tacken with granades & poudre, Casell yard was set on fier, i am all most out of my wits, we have packed up all our goods & cannot get a cart for money, thay give 5 & 10 pound for carts. I have sent for carts to my Lady Glaskock if I can get them, but I fear I shall los all I have and must run away. O pray for us for now the crys macks me I know not what to say, O pety me. I will breck open the closet and look to all your things as well as i can, I hop if it com to us it will be Thursday but it runs fearsly, O i shall los all i have, we have sent to se for carts to send to higat & cannot get one [for] twenty pound to go out of town. Viner and Backwall have saved all, and so has all Lumbert Stret, all Pols-churchyard cloth is saved. Mr. Glaskock is com & says we shall have carts tomorrow. God bles us & send us a good meting.' Two days later she writes again: 'O dear Sir, we are all undon, the holl sety is down, my hous is not yet burnt, but all I have turn'd out, & som saf & the rest in the Sept. 5, 1666.
felds.' Among the distracting rumours in the crowd a report ran that the French and Dutch who had planned the fire would sack the town, and with this 'dreadful outcry we did look to be kiled every hour, I have all most lost my wits & my por gearls. It has cost me 20%. to remove my goods in porters & carts if you can sen me som money you will hyly obleg me, you shall have it again at Micklmas dear sir send me but 10%. & love & pety yr Scr^t A. H.'

Lady Hobart has lost her wits in good company; the Lord Mayor, Sir Thomas Bludworth, running about 'with a handkercher about his neck, cried out like a fainting woman to the king's message—Lord what can I do, I am spent, people will not obey me, I have been pulling down houses, but the fire overtakes us faster than we can do it!' It was evident if the fire did not reach Chancery Lane 'before Thursday' it would not be thanks to the City magnate, who, flurried and worn out by the unwonted exertion of running

about all night, had gone home 'to refresh himself,' leaving London to burn. The rapid spreading of the fire 'bred a kind of Distraction and stupidity in the Inhabitants and neighbourhood near it.' The pipes had been destroyed in a few hours, and the water supply, such as it was, failed entirely. Men were clamouring for Monk, but he was out of town the first days, and the fire was even more hasty and unreasonable to deal with than Saints and Levellers. 'Negligence,' says an old chronicler, 'turned into a Confusion, Consternation & despair, People chusing rather by flight to save their own goods than by a vigorous opposition to save their houses & the whole City.'

Friends wrote at first to tell each other what streets were burned down; then they count up 'those that are yet standing.' Dr. Denton writes: 'Whether this will find you or noe I know not because I know not where the carrier doth inne, the fire being now come as far as Holborn Bridge or near it. The short account of the fire is that more than the whole city is in ashes, wherein W. Gape & my selfe have great shares in St. Sythes Lane, and in Salisbury Court in reversion & I & wife in possession, & to render our condition more deplorable, the depopulation is soe vast that it cannot afford us a livelihood so that I want the advice of all my friends to advise what I had best doe. Our persons I thank God & our moveables are saved but at a vast charge, 4*l*. for every load to Kensington. The frendes in Chancery Lane are safe, but the fire was neare them behind the Rowles where it gott a great check soe that we hope it is stopt, I think they are still in towne. We had sent away all but my bookes soe that we were fayne to ly only on blanketts. It came so far as to burn the King's Bench office & the Alienation Office, but not so far as Nelly's chambers. Our Navy lies at St. Ellen's point & the Dutch on the Coast of Bretaine. This fire stops all trade & traffique & posts, the sad consequences of which may easily be ghessed att. Since I writ this the fire broke out at the Temple again next to Nelly's Chambers, & his chamber the Duke caused to be blown up & it hath burnt now the Inner Temple Hall & I

have not heard how much further. . . . I give you many thanks for your invitation, but at present am in such a distraction that I know not how to make use of it, we are neyther safe here nor you there, for it is generally beleaved. but not at court, that the Papists have designed this & more. many & strong presumptions there are for it, as gunpowder, & balls & wildfire taken about many of them, that if they destroy them there are more left behind to doe the business; send them to Whitehall they are all dismissed Here nothing almost is to be gott that we have not in possession, bread, bear, meat, all in scarcity & many want it The fire broke out vehemently again last night about Shoe Lane, & as we ghesse about Cripple Gate, but we ghesse by the smoke that it is well-laid againe. I wish 2 or 3 trunks with you, but they are at Kensington & I know not how to convey them. . . . Just now Dick Parker is come from the Temple & saies that the Temple Hall is safe & only Tansfield Court burnt & the Church is safe. Harry went to looke for the Carrier without my privity, soe I am gonge myselve to find him, for I dare not send a man out of doors for feare of being pressed to work att the fir, James & Jack were both pressed this morning.'

'Clothworkers' Hall is now on fire but in a fair way of being stopped. Justice Godfrey behaved himself so well at the Temple, that the King would have knighted him, but he refused it, so the King has ordered a piece of plate of 50*l*. for him with his arms upon it, & with ex dono etc. Betty Adams sent this day purposely to us to invite us to her if in distresse, & my Cozen Turberville sent to proffer men, carts & horses. we are in such a confused condicion that we know not w^t favor of frends to make use of, though we have need of them all.' 'The very very sad misfortune of poor London is an unexspressable troble to us all,' writes Mrs. Elmes from Stanford; 'sure soe sad a sight was never seen be foare as that sitty is now lying in ashes, besides the uninnmajanable loos the hole kingdom receives buy it.' Her own things have suffered much in removal, and those who have paid heavily for having their goods carried into the fields

Sept. 6,
1666.

Sept. 8,
1666.

are half provoked when the fire stops short of their houses. Aunt Isham is terrified at the stories that reach her 'that there is dayly taking of Men, & some in Woman Clothes with fier bals.'

Sept. 7,
1666

Sir Nathaniel Hobart, when the panic is abating, feels that after all they have had 'no great share in this calamity otherwise than as it becomes christians to have a fellow-feeling for one another's miseries, yet the image of this terrible judgment has made such an impression in the soules of every one of us, that it will not be effaced while we live.' They are unable to accept Sir Ralph's hospitality, 'for the Term approaches & Parlament claims our attendance. We have the same apprehensions of future tumults, but we are in the storm & must ride it out, besides I must keep to my calling, for that you know keeps me. The Duke of Albemarle came this night to towne, happily if he had bin heere before the Towne might have bin saved, but God was not pleased, & we must submit to his will.' Lady Hobart adds 'when you com to us you will not know whar you ar,' so completely had the old familiar landmarks disappeared. Houses are at a premium, and the fire was hardly quenched when his landlord warned Sir Nathaniel out of his house, 'but I am in possession & intend God willing to keep it. . . . I told my wife what he would doe & so was not deceived, as soone as he shall seale a lease of Ejectment I will put in a bill in Chancery & get an injunction . . . he is a person so odious that if his cause were just he would hardly find favour. The King has forbidden any building till the Parliament sitts, the rebuilding of the Citty will not bee soe difficult as the satisfying all interests, there being so many proprieters. The great streights the Citizens are in, will not bring them to this end of the Towne. The Exchange is kept at Gresham College.'

Sept. 18,
1666.

The City is a desert, the physicians who practised there are flocking westward, where they find so many more of their craft bereft of patients, that they fear they shall be reduced to bleeding one another. Dr. Denton resolves, however, to bide his time ' & try how practice will come in ';

his wife has lost houses that brought her in 86*l.* per annum, 'and now she hath had a little time to recollect herself, she cryes all day longe. I shall take what care I can off her, but all in my power cannot make it good to her.' A deluge of water in the Fens was as destructive to his property there as the want of it had proved in town; but the pious Doctor thanks God for what is left: 'it pleases Him that we should live in a continual dependance on him, & I hope we shall do'

A surveyor's report sent to Sir Ralph states that the fire burnt from 1 or 2 A.M. on the 2nd of September until the 6th, consuming 373 acres within the City walls and 63 acres 3 roods without the walls; 89 parish churches besides chapels, and 13,200 houses were destroyed. Aunt Isham writes of a hurricane near Lincoln in which the wind blew fifty houses over with 'Hay-ricks, Corn-ricks & all trees; hailstones fell as big as half-crownes & the inside was like to Butter vole & one had little things like maggots, thes be great Judgments, the Lord make every one of us mend one.' After describing the desolate look of the country with all the trees by the roots, she says it was 'as naked a place as ^{Sept. 26,} the Citie of London,' a surprising expression, until the date ^{1666.} reminds us that the letter was written by an eye-witness during the month of the Fire.

Cary is 'so trobled at the sad nuse of the distrocktion of ^{Sept. 26,} Londone that I could not rit . . . you know it was all my ^{1666.} sone had to depend on and my girls, so you may esoly imagine my consarn, ther is bot one house left of 18 pound a yeare of all that nomber.' John Stewkeley writes later: 'In that sad & universall loss wee had no snall share, but a ^{Dec. 17,} patient resignation to his will that sent it, is the best ^{1666.} mitigation wee can think of, either in that or other disappointments or crosses that your sister & I have undergone since wee mett together, which are all lessen'd I thank God, by our mutuall affection & injoying one of another & our young branches.' They were not idle words. Mun wrote of Stewkeley in his old age, 'He is so gay in his humour that he appears at least 7 years younger then his son Jack

& at least once & Twenty then his son Will,' whose 'gravity & reservedness' were of an unattractive quality. A family subscription is got up to restore Nelly Denton's chambers in the Temple, but the confusion left by the fire affects all trades down to the smallest; Sir Ralph can scarcely find a cradle for an expected arrival at the White House, 'such things being very deare now, as all their stores are burnt.' Had the fire reached the wig-makers, that a change of fashion was announced that autumn? Moll Gape informs her country cousins that 'all fals locks & foretops are left off, nothing but our owne haire worne now by women, but men will not bee brought to itt as yet.' 'Builders & tenants are to seek,' and by the autumn of 1667 'ground goes even a begging, & there is soe much to be sold that it becomes every day cheaper than the other'; even when tenants are found to build, they will pay no rent 'till Christmas come twelvemonth,' and 'Stewkeley must e'en be content with the loss that dreadful fire brings on him.'

CHAPTER XLVII.

JOHN VERNEY AT ALEPPO.

1662-1674.

JOHN VERNEY left England in 1662, prepared to take up with high hope and courage his post in the factory at Aleppo. The working partners of the firm were Gabriel Roberts in London, to whom John was still apprenticed; and, at Aleppo, his brother William Roberts, and John Sheppard (related to Jack's old friend Luce), a distant cousin of the Verneys.

Sir Thomas Bludworth (now remembered as the paucistricken Lord Mayor of burning London, and as father-in-law of Judge Jeffreys) supplied the capital, together with Mr. Richard Spencer, Mr. Thomas Lewis, Mr. Sam Dashwood, and Mr. Jos. Hamond. 'Sir Thomas Bludworth is the great trader of them all and sends generally above twice as much as any of the rest, though Mr. Lewis is as rich as any.' The factory consists of some fifty Englishmen, among whom is 'cozen Dick Fust,' brother of Jack's school-chum, and another Buckinghamshire youth, brother to Sir Thomas Leo of Hartwell.

The factories were known collectively as 'the nation'; there was an English Consul at Aleppo who had 'pre-eminence of all other Christian Consuls Resident,' and a Vice-consul at Scanderoon. The Levant Company sent out a chaplain 'for the instruction of our people in knowledge of religion, and in reproving and rebuking whatsoever shall deserve reproof or admonition': a commission which when literally interpreted caused 'discontent and disagreement between our Factors and our Chaplain,' to the great surprise

of the Company. A distinguished Oxford man held the post of chaplain at Aleppo for eleven years—Dr. Robert Huntington, a learned Hebrew scholar, who enriched the Merton and Bodleian libraries with Eastern books; but John Verney returned home soon after Huntington's appointment, and there is no evidence of their having met.

The Beaumaris merchant and ship-captain Lewis Roberts (father of Gabriel and William) has left an account of the city and its commerce as he knew them: 'Aleppo,' he says, 'called in 2 Sam: 8 3. Aram Zobah, is now the most famous city in all the grand Seignior's dominions, for the confluence of merchants of all nations. It is pleasantly seated upon a plain, in the midst whereof doth rise a small hill whereupon is built a strong castle that commands the whole city. It hath in it many Khans for lodgings, and warehouses which resemble small forts, being shut with iron gates, to defend the merchants and their goods from wrong. Their streets are shut with doors every night at each end in the manner of Cairo, and thereby each street becomes defensible by itself.' The chief exports are 'Cotton and Cotton Wools, Galls for Dyers, Aniseeds, Cordovants, Wax, Grograin, Yarns, Chanilets, Carpets, Gems from India, Spices from Arabia, Mohairs & Raw Silks brought overland from Persia, and Goatshair.' The Company's ships brought in return the famous English cloth from Suffolk, Essex, and Gloucester; kerseys from Yorkshire and Hampshire; English lead and tin, and Indian spices and indigo which had first gone to London by the Cape.

'We lye in the open air in summer,' writes John, 'on the tops of our houses, and are often troubled with little flyes which sting our hands and faces'; and for the cold in winter he wants 'Wash-leather gloves to write in.' They rejoice when 'frosty and snowy weather' comes in October, because it kills the locusts.

The most pressing item in Jack's 'Note of Necessarys' is 'a Grey Beaver Hatt not too high crownd nor sharp crownd but Broad brimmd . . . for hats of 3*l.* 10*s.*, or 4*l.*, are sold

for 7*l.* 10*s.*, and as this, so all other necessaries, few or none weare any but beavers here to save charges, for one good hatt will last a man 6 or 7 yeares in this factory.'

His wants are generously supplied from home. Edmund sends him 'strings of all sorts for the Lyro Violl in 2 round black boxes to the value of 20*s.*, besides 5 bridges which cost $\frac{1}{2}$ a crowne; also a crimson velvet saddle with a cover for it,' and a complete set of horse trappings: 'all as good as could be got for money.'

If John 'can light upon a well-tempered Turkish or Persian Scymeterre or Battle Axe, or Persian Bowe & Arrowes or such like Toyes,' Edmund would like to have them, and 'if the prices be too great for a younger brother to beare' he will repay him. He also desires to have 'some silke waskots & shirts of the sort of linnen made where you are, a Turkish habit from head to foot, but not of cloth, because that's too common here. Let all be neate & handsome, the Turbant cheefly I am bigger & taller something then you, therefore bespeake it accordingly'; 'though your calling be not such as I did wish you, yet since it was your choice, swerve not therefrom, but withal remember you are a gentleman, and show yourself on all occasions to be a man of worth and courage.' But John was not long in discovering that something besides worth was needed to push his fortunes. His prospects were anything but brilliant. There was already a race amongst European nations for the commerce of the East. France with Spain was bringing cloth into the market, calling it *Drap de Londres*, and marking it with the names of English makers; and the Dutch were as un-May 1668.scrupulous in their rivalry. 'A man of war' of theirs,' Mun writes, 'went into the Redd Sea, and hung up English colours, and took all he could rap and ring from the Turkes wch incensed their Emperor highly, but by good fortune all was timely discovered so there was an end.' The Turkish Government itself was breaking treaties and ignoring pledgesJan. 16,
1666. as it has continued to do ever since. 'Mr. Robert Frampton, the Rev: minister at this Factory,' is going to London to inform the Turkey Company of these things. 'Our Intrigues

now are with the greatest Courtiers of this Empire, And notwithstanding our Ambassador's power we are likely to be foiled.'

The foreign competition and Turkish misrule which affected the prosperity of 'the nation' were less injurious to Jack than rivalries within the factory. Each man in it was playing for his own hand, and using any influence he could command in England to have 'the ventures' sent out to his own name, not to the firm. Mr Roberts and Mr. Sheppard viewed John with jealousy as a coming partner, and the only commission allowed him was upon goods which Mr. Gabriel Roberts sent out.

This was not what Sir Ralph had been led to expect, when he paid a heavy premium for his son, and consented to so protracted a separation. Jack's chances now lay in the interest his father could make for him in England, and in the money he could send him, with which to make his own bargains. John was not a youth to sit still under disappointment. While he complained bitterly of the small profits of the work, he carried it on with his usual ability and diligence. He scrupulously kept to every rule of the Company, allowed himself no 'immoderate or unseasonable recreation nor suffered his business ever to be performed by others.' He thus succeeded in gaining 'Cozen Sheppard's' respect and good will; he would blush to repeat to his father 'those hearty expressions and praises' which Sheppard gave him in his report to Gabriel Roberts.

There was an occasional press of business, but it was on the whole a monotonous life, varied by the hundred miles' ride to Scanderoon, when John went down to meet an incoming ship, or to superintend the despatch of the precious bales brought by trains of camels to the sea. A ship's captain or a traveller with news from home was a welcome guest at the factory, and in the midst of the exciting changes that followed the Restoration, the young men laid bets on the fate of the fallen. 'Pray sir, when you honour me with a letter,' writes Jack to his father, 'advise me whether Sir Henry Vane by his death saved his estate or noe, or

whether his hairs enjoy a half of it, I having a wager of 30*l*. to my 3*l* of it.'

Jack had at last a pleasant distraction. 'On occasion ^{1605.} presented in an idle time to goe to the Holy Land, halfe the factory did doe it, and among them myself.' Dick Fust wrote home that John had started 'with about 20 more Englishmen on the 19th of March, he took shipping in an English bottom for Joppa, and from thence to Jerusalem intending to be back in May.' Dick very earnestly begged his father 'to furnish him to see the place also . . . it being the custom for most of our Englishmen that stay any time at Aleppo to see Jerusalem.' A relic of John's journey still exists at Claydon, in a parchment signed and sealed by 'Frater Bernardus Botuel . . . Custodiæ Terræ Sanctæ Vicarius' to testify that he had duly visited the Holy Places.

'Mr. Nightingale, the great factor at Aleppo, is coming to England suddenly, Mr Sheppard may be the next Grandee.' Gamaliel Nightingale, Consul at Aleppo, was above forty years resident in Turkey and Persia. He died between Astracan and Moscow on one of his many journeys (1693). The Tsar and twelve of his nobles attended his burial.¹

Jack warns his father not to send out money except through Mr. Gabriel Roberts. 'Mr. Fane (who dwells ^{Dec. 11, 1668.} in our house) hath been nipt, his Father Sir Francis, gave 700*l*. to a merchant to be sent hither . . . but by that time the shipp sett sayle the merchant broke, a scurvy misfortune for a younger brother. I have received the periwig you sent me, and it fits very well, but I have not had any occasion of one since its arrivall, my owne haire (which is extraordinary thick and curling) being now long enough without.'

He sends home a small sack of melon seeds by his father's request, but he cannot get any choice kinds, 'for in this country among these heathens none are known, here they are not worth 12*d* a million.' Later he is able to get

¹ F. C. Nightingale, Esq., of East Molesey, kindly sent me this information.

some special melon seeds 'of Mesopotamia, where they grow in the sands of the river Euphrates after the fall of the winter overflowings, they are here much more esteemed than the mellons of this country. . . . Sir Thomas Lee of Hartwell hath some of the same sent him from hence.'

Five years go by of protracted negotiations, 'there are not three in the nation that spend so little,' yet John finds he shall be 'but upon a balance.' He cannot bear to trouble his father with 'craving petitions,' but he has times of depression when it is hard not to fancy himself forgotten.

March 24,
1666.

In the summer of 1667 he has been two and a half years without news, though he gives repeated and minute directions about his address. Letters are to be sent 'via Marselia' and to be given in 'on a post night at the Outland post-house in the Poultry, London,' unless sent by private hand, but every way their delivery is most uncertain. Lady Elmes hears 'strainge stories of the Jewse & amunge the rest that theare is 400 Profits at Alepoe, sure Jack will turne one, or att least wise send some newse of them.' Jack takes no interest in the prophets and is pre-occupied with the alarming accounts that had reached Aleppo 'of the late dreadful mortality in England'; he had been ill himself most of the previous winter, and he longed wearily 'for the very great comfort' of a letter from his father 'to be certified of your and my Relations health.' 'By this Ship Robert, I have ordered to be laden a Bagg of Excellent Pistaches for my Brother, but she is so little a ship it was with great difficulty I gott Mr. Nightingale, with whom you are acquainted, to promise me they should be taken.'

Feb. 20,
1666.

His position has not improved: 'Mr. William Roberts' pride & a stubborne will of ruleing' has made him refuse every scheme proposed to give John a larger share in the profits. He does not depend on the 'trade in shipping & Grosse goods . . . he hath all the yeare long great sums of money either from Constantinople, Leghorn, or Venice.' John is entirely dependent upon what his old master can do for him, 'who if God should take from this world I must return home, for a farthing more I should not gett in this

Country unless I had a good considerable estate of my owne to improve.' He hoped that Mun would invest 1000*l*, for which John could get him a good return. When at last a budget of home letters reaches him, he is delighted to hear of the birth of an heir at East Claydon, but his father shows him that no capital is to be hoped for from there.

At length, John's patience is rewarded. Gabriel Roberts, March 1668
'the only friend on whom his hopes depend in a mercantile way,' has arranged that he shall enter into partnership with Shppard, he having four sevenths and John three sevenths of the profits. By great economy John has just paid his way, and has kept whatever money his father has been able to send him 'entire' as capital to trade with.

The father and brother at Claydon are equally unhappy at the long gaps in the correspondence; two at least of John's letters unscarried, and Sir Ralph wrote in anger, which was really anxiety, about his son's neglect. John is grieved to the heart, he apologises and explains 'pray in your next casheer these clouds by your act of oblivion for former manquement.' . . . 'Last June,' he writes, 'going to Jan. 18, 1669.
Scanderoon about business & staying there only 5 days I catcht—or rather Scanderoon disease catcht me—and continued upon me for 3 months, changing the collour of my flesh to that yellownesse, which is customary for that disease, & seldom ever after alters, though, thanks be to God, I am not only perfectly cured but have the same complexion I had before.'

John was full of eagerness to improve his new partnership, when an overwhelming calamity fell upon Aleppo. Those narrow streets with their teeming population were ravaged by the plague for four months. John could write in August that it was 'now nere over, but it hath swept away in this city 150,000 people, besides it hath raged in all the towns and villages about us. Most of our Nation fledd, 6 of us only remained here, of which 2 died of the infection. I was out of town a few dayes to despatch some business at Aug. 5, 1669.
Scanderoon, nere which place died Sir Thos. Lee's brother

of the Plague. I was in the tent with him, till the day before he died, not till then imagining he had that disease. I escaped yet more narrowly another who went out of Aleppo with me, & had the Plague on him. We did not only travell, Eat & Drinke but lay together, 2 dayes before he died, which was under my Tent, I began to mistrust him and left him when in bedd together. Of the Plague and that rascally Scanderoon desease which seldom proves less mortall, are dead 7 of our Factory this summer, which is twice as many as has died ever since I came here.' 'We have buried 5 more of our Nation, one fourth of the Factory are this summer dead, & most of the living have been sicke, among which I was a sharer for about 25 dayes . . . my respects to those of my relations that have not forgotten me.'

Sept. 9,
1669.

The winter season finds him more cheerful and able to think once more of his father's love of gardening. 'I send you a little sack of Berryes of a tree of these parts that groweth not in England. Its leaves are of an admirable green. The Blossoms (which smell rarely) of as good a Blew or darkish Skye collour. Its groth is to the bignesse of an Elme nere upon, it beareth nothing but these berryes which drop off in the winter, & are not of any knowne goodnesse, that its only a delightfull tree to looke on. If it will growe in our country I cannot but thinke it worth the having, if so be only for its rarity. 2 years since I sent you some seeds, if they produce good mellons I'll get you more from Mesopotamia whence I brought those, which though they are incomparably good, yet in 2 or 3 years groth in other parts change soe much, that they differ little from Cowcombers, as English Peas are worth nothing if every year we sow not those that come from Christendom for to sett them that grow here though their original be English, & but of two years planting, yet are they not worth the gathering, such difference there is between the soyles of Countreys.'

Jan. 30,
1670.

He spent a month in Cyprus in 1670, on the business of the Company. The following spring he wrote to introduce to his father 'one Thomas Rowland a ship Chirurgeon, who

March 25,
1671.

while he was at Aleppo favoured me with his good company in my house. He is Buckinghamshire born which adds to the respect I bear any Englishman. It's soe long since I heard from you that I begin to despaire of having the happinesse you formerly granted me by your dear letters. It is all one charge whether they consist of a whole or a quarter of a sheet of paper.' He makes a despairing appeal to Mun for tidings. 'I doe desire to robb you of one mornings pleasure or buisnesse, and to confine you to your Closct, there on a sheet or two of paper to muster up an accompt of all my relations, who and to whom any are marryed, what increase there is of our kindsfolke and what decrease by death; this with what enlargement you think fitting . . . I assure you will be very wellcome to one who of so many relations . . . in eight yeares time hath heard but of three or foure.' While John was eating his heart out with hope deferred, the packet of home letters which he longed for had left Claydon many months previously, and had been returned again from Syria unopened. It should have reached him the summer of the great plague, when there was but little intercourse between the ships and the stricken city. The packet dated June 26, 1670, found its way back to Claydon, where, strange to say, it remained with unbroken seal for 200 years. Sir Harry Verney's second son George (Colonel Lloyd-Verney) found it when cataloguing some old letters. It was solemnly opened in full family conclave on October 20, 1865, when the Claydon news which John had so pined to hear was read at last.

His own letters fared little better. He found one mail still at Scanderoon which he had despatched two months before: 'Our ships do not dare to depart for fear of 4 dogereens who lay at Cyprus threatening them.' The next packet sent by a French ship never reached Marseilles, being taken 'by the Tunisseens.' From August '68 to November '71 he has not heard from his father, and he fears that 'long absence and new kindred might in any other less generous spirit than yours cause love to faint and turn into remembrance only.' But John's place had never

Jan. 10,
1670

been filled at home. Cary Gardiner writes: 'Dear Nevegh, About All-Hallow-Tide I returned from Claydon wher I injoyed much comfort in your Father's good company, who I never saw look better in my life then at that time only you ware mising to compleat our contint, wher you ware daly wished for and yr good helth perpetually dronk though not to yr Father who we did not love to discourse of you to, finding your absinc was a touble to him, who I hope you will sodenly come to see, which I am sure will joy his heart to look on . . . bot I wish you had atuned to all thos advantages that Yr travel can ad to you, that you might return to thos relations that longs to see you.' Peg Gardiner, his playfellow in childish days, writes him an affectionate little note. 'Your wife presents her servis to you, but thinks you a little unkind in staying from her soe long.'

Dec. 25,
1672.

In 1672 John lost 'Foure hundred & odd pounds' which Gabriel Roberts had put out for him, and during the summer 'wanting business to imploy' him he had been 'voyageing to & fro the Country for severall months.'

May 8,
1673.

Sir Ralph became somehow possessed of an idea which the imagination refuses to associate with John, that he was neglecting his business at Aleppo for amusement. 'Were there any Pleasure in this country,' John writes, 'I had leasure enough to enjoy it for of Eleven years I have been in Exile, full seven of them have not brought me in imployment enough to reap my Expenses in meat, drink, and clothing, and for the pleasures I can't think of any, except riding twice a week (a little before sunset in summer) and that too is accompanied with such feares (and many times intreagues happen on it) that the edge of delight is quite blunted. Besides this delight is generall, for 'tis taken by the whole Nation who particularly dare not venture abroad.' A little later the eldest son of their chief partner Sir Thomas Bludworth had 'a miraculous escape' on one of these rides: 'being about 20 miles from Aleppo, a Gourdeen amongst the rocks, tho' several servants were with him, shot a bullet at him, & cut off the hair off the hinder part of his head.' To Mun he writes: 'To satisfye you as to my return home,

May 8,
1673

I hope in 12 months to kiss your hands in England, where the surest Remoia to stay your sons is a good inheritance, a thing most of my degree are by law and custom strangers to.'

On reaching London, John was received with much cordiality by his old master, now Sir Gabriel Roberts, and his wife, and the effect produced upon him by meeting old friends and relatives was to make him yearn for a home of his own after his long banishment. 'If ever I settle in the way of marriage,' he writes to his father, 'I am certain the first proffers are best & at a man's first coming from Turkey, for then estates are least known and rumours run high.' Sir Ralph agrees with him 'that young Marchants have the best offers when they first come over,' and John is soon approached in the City by a Mr. Edwards who has a marriageable daughter aged about 19. 'He is a widower upwards of 60 and saith will never marry againe, a friend of mine who hath knowne him many years tells me he is a very honest man, and that his dau'r is a good housewife, never bred to Playes nor Parkes, but a sober, discreet & godly young woman. . . . For Mr. Edwards his birth, I know not what 'tis but a plain man he is, & his dealing is in Cloth w^{ch} possibly may be of good advantage to me in his advise and skill when I buy that commodity, he is no shop-keeper but lives in a little house in Basinghall St. & will take a bigger as he finds one commodious for him. He hath given his son 2,500*l.* to trade with. By the fire of London he is the worst by 10,000*l.* as he told me, yet he is a rich man computed worth 10,000*l.* so that if I can skrew him up a little higher I know no reason, if the match be consonant to your will but that I may have her. One thing more Mr. Edwards told me that is this, his daughter (he said) brought in no kindred with her, neither of great persons to be a charge by way of entertainment, nor of mean to be a charge by way of charity and their needyness.'

Mr. Edwards has a good many questions to put to the 'young Marchant,' but John declines to enter into any details on his side until he has had some chance of making acquaint-

Aug. 1674

Aug 20,
1674

ance with 'his Daughter never by me seen.' Mr. Edwards 'at last agreed to walke his daughter the next morning in Drapers' Garden, where with my master I met them and continued walkeing together nere two houres, this was done that I might have a sight of her to see if I found nothing disgustfull, but we interchang'd not one word with her, only my Master asked her 3 or 4 questions, for 'twas agreed on, that all should be as by accident & he s^d he would not acquaint her with the reason of his walking there—but we are at liberty to believe him. Now it remains on my part to give her a visitt, w^{ch} I intend to do in 2 or 3 days, to let them see her Eyes have not quite dazzled my reason, & truly tho' her beauty is not like to preferr her to the title of a Duchess, yet she is a very passable woman & well shapt, & shewed herselfe without any artificiall gracings, save that her Gowne & petticoates were all new; but her head was not in the least adorn'd for a surprize, w^{ch} I liked ne're the worse, for in Turkey we say, If you want a horse buy a lean one, & then you'll see what fatness (that creature's ornament) would have hid from you, but to leave this ayry way of writing, w^{ch} I hope (since I beg it) you'll pardon—the Gentlewoman is a passable handsome woman, & her father able if he be but willing to give her money enough.'

The ladies of the family, when John puts off his return to Claydon, at once conclude 'twas courting some woman hindered him,' and Lady Hobart 'put her little ingions in the fire to see if she could discover any such thng,' but John 'stands on his guard against her Female Politics,' hopes she may enjoy her own visit to Claydon, and begs his father to let his guests know that 'our Turkey ships from Smyrna left Leghorne the 23rd of July soe that in 10 dayes they may be here, 'tis true I am not concerned on them but this may serve as a putt off when anyone talks of my not visiting you.'

Sir Ralph responds affectionately, offers to relieve Jack of his horse, and reminds him that Cousin Jefferyes has a daughter whom he might have inquired about, before concluding the treaty with Mr. Edwards. He begs him to find

means to convey ten pounds to Tom in Ireland, 'but write not in your owne hand for he will haunt you eternally with letters of request if he finds that you have any hand in it.' 'As to my Coz Jeffereyes daughter, I knew not,' Jack replies Sept. 3, 1674 'whether there were such a creature in being . . . but if his friends will propose certaintyes, I'll step downe to see her, I think she lives with Coz: Will: Sheppard, but I suppose old fox Dormer (no friend to our family) is the axeltree on which that fortune depends, and I fear his terms at first or last by way of settlements will be as hard to me, as his love to my brother.' He has paid one visit to 'Madam Edwards' and means at his next 'to acquaint her with (what she knows) my airant.' He has 'verbally agreed' with her father about her fortune in great detail, even to the accommodation the old man is to give them in his house, 'he hath but one room that he can spare and if his son bring home a wife then we must jogg out.' 'This is not amiss,' he concludes, after summing it all up, 'considering if withall I marry one that hath no father, her cloaths at wedding, etc. must all be paid out of the portion, & some people require so much expense in wooing & treating, carrying up and down to playes, etc. that tho' they bring more smoake yet (in the end) there is less roast found.'

John's views of marriage at this time certainly befitted a man 'newly come out of Turkey'; and it is a relief to find that these elaborate bargainings came to nothing. He had failed to fall in love, and he fell once more to business; eight years were to elapse, till in middle life John met his fate, and yielded to the spell of a love as true and tender as Sir Ralph had ever felt for 'that incomparable person, Dame Mary of blessed memory.'



THE WHITE HOUSE, EAST CLAYDON

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE SQUIRE OF EAST CLAYDON.

1665-1677.

'I BEELEEFVE you know that Capt: Blarkes is dead. His company was in Alisbury, & Burnham Hundred, certainly hee died of Fatt, for hee would not bee perswaded to rise early, nor to use much excercise, nor to drinke any thing but New Beere, soe that hee was growne very Bigg, & choaked; the Surgeon assures me all his parts were very sound, & that hee verily beeleeved hee died with Fatt, hee being between 30 & 40 years old. If you know any gentleman that does the very same thing in all points, I wish you could provaile with him to doe otherwise, least hee kill himselfe by it':

thus did the anxious Sir Ralph preface a moral lecture to his eldest son on his 'ill lowers, greate Lazinesse and general course of Liveing.'

The good-humoured and incorrigible Mun was wont to join a little grimly in the laugh against himself, 'I am weary of this deepe Dirty Country life,' he writes on a wet November day, 'for want of such a strong Horse as I may depend upon, yea 'tis safer for mee to foot it, then to Ride any Beast of an ordinary Strength, Nevertheless that is More irksome & dismall to mee, then all the Irish Boggss or Lincolnshire Washes, for I can never Walke, but I sinke so deepe in the Earth (such a heavy Burthen thereof am I growne) that it puts mee frequently in mind of Korah's, Dathan's, & Abiram's Fate: soe that without the Convenience of a very lusty Good Horse, I am like to stick fast in this Ugly Clay'

He is a big, tall man, weighing twenty stone at the age of thirty-seven and growing heavier, but he has a certain air of refinement which marks his foreign training, and a wider acquaintance with the world than the country squires about him. He drinks French wines at home, and is not of those who conclude the evening repast under the table. He acquires a slouching gait as he grows older and stouter, and he can only get on his heavy boots now with 'much ado & great helpe.' His tailor is constantly rebuked for not taking sufficiently ample measurements. 'My Coate is too scanty in the circumference, a fault a man should not have committed that had ever seen me.' He wears a large grey beaver hat with a loop and button on one side, and a knot of ribbons to match the colour of his suit, where the brim is turned up. He orders his 'stirrup thredd stockings' from the hosier near St. Dunstan's Church; they are to be of a 'bignesse & length wch is greater than ordinary.' Mary Verney is tall too, but very slight; we hear of a 'black thread bodice she wears at home' and of 'ribband Knots for her head of sky collar, or yellow, to go with it.' When Mun wishes to pleasure his wife he has a pair of stockings made for her in 'very fine worsted, the colour

of scarlet Bow-dye, as good as can be gott, The Feet must be very extraordinary smale, but the Leggs must be very long though very little likewise.' He also buys her 'a twelve penny Black Orange Necklesse.' He is very particular about his sword and 'his carabine, his pocket-pistols and screwed pistols,' and has a suit of light armour, though the fashion of wearing it has almost gone out. He plays the lute and gutar, and has generally a book on hand; the story of the Siege of Buda, the last French treatise on the Art of War, Mr. Dryden's Verses, besides sermons, political squibs, pamphlets, and News Letters which come down by carrier. On his study table there is 'a very little brass mathematicall instrument about the length of a Pen to draw lines with ink, & also an Ebony Ruler.' He writes excellent letters, keeps copies of them, and docketts those he receives. But while sharing many of Sir Ralph's tastes, he fails where his father excels, in the management of men and in the maintenance of his personal dignity. His disorderly household is the constant theme of local gossip. Nurse Curzon, his head servant, is 'old, crazy and decayed, and hath more need to have one to look to her, than to look after others.' The village nursemaid has been chosen, in Sir Ralph's judgment, 'very unadvisedly, & tis greate odds his child would be changed for one of the Nurse's Sister's children.' Every one about him imposes upon his good nature; entangled in a network of debts which he puts off or ignores, his rents are in arrears, his horses fall lame, and when the ill-written letters his man sends out in his name are complained of, he replies with a shrug of his broad shoulders, that it is as impossible to make the man a better scribe as to wash a blackamoor white. The lads in his employ turn out no better. 'I caused my little boy Thom: Warner to be whipped againe this morning for more ffaults then this sheete will containe viz. Picking Pockets, opening Boxes that were lockt, Picking locks, Stealing, Lying, &c.'

Will Stewkeley, the scapegrace of the family, manages these things better than Mun. 'I wish Will good luck at Brackley,' writes Sir Ralph, ' & am glad hee made soe much

advantage of my gelding, Had I a very good Horse that I loved, I had much rather sell him to him for 50 Pounds, then to you for 4 score, for he delights in a good Horse, & takes pleasure to improve him, by his constant care, and kindnesse, and on the other side, you would contrive all imaginable wayes to spoyle him, by Marketing, Dungearting, carrying Double, & w^{ch} is worst of all, by sending him on Idle Errands, with Idle, ignorant Fellowes, that have neither care, nor skill to ride him, tis true you allow him meate enough, if your men doe not forget to feed him, as they alwayes doe to shoe, wash, or Dresse him, all this beeing true (and a greate deale more) what comfort could I take to see a poore creature that I Loved, soo miserably spoyled by you that ought to preserve him—Enough of this (and too much too) for I am sure you will never mend it.’

Mun pays Cousin Woodward a visit to arrange for his wife’s confinement. ‘touchant une sage-femme nous parlâmes de cette demoiselle Kent, ce Quaker de Reading, et elle la loue grandement, d’être tres habile dans son art et le mesme faisait aussi la vieille dam^{elle} Woodward, laquelle fut, il n’y a gueres, dans un lieu ou ce Quaker exerçoit son office, & elle dit qu’elle n’avoit jamais veue une si cognoissante & adroite sage-femme, et que chascun se croit bien heureux s’il peut l’avoir, & qu’on luy donne 20*l.*, 10*l.*, et au moindre 5*l.*, pour sa peine, & que cette femme ne veut rien prendre des pareins et mareines, & qu’elle ne se mesle jamais à parler de religion a ses patientes, qu’elle eust esté la sage-femme de la Reine, & que si elle promets de venir qu’elle est parfaitement fidele à sa parole.’ Mun finally decides, however, on religious grounds, not to engage the clever Quakeress. Mary is in better spirits when she has a baby to look after, and takes pleasure in the adornment of the cradle and the ‘peencushion.’ She wears a ‘white satin Mantle’ for the christening of her little Ralph, a white satin waistcoat, a white summer gown lined with white silk, and a white mohair potticoat, all of which Aunt Elmes has ordered in London; there is also a fine white mantle to lay over the head of the cradle, and a smaller one to

match, to wrap the child in when taken out, or to form a quilt.

But happy days such as these were too soon overclouded, and Mary's fits of madness made the house at times almost unbearable, though in her worst attacks she was more amenable to her husband's influence than to any other. He was assiduous in his attendance upon her, and was nervously anxious to conceal her condition from outsiders. When in health she was gentle and amiable, full of sympathy for her poorer neighbours, and she was still 'my beloved wife,' and 'my darling Moll'; but at other times his bitterness of soul overflowed in letters to his father. '*Ma Femme n'est constante que dans ses humeurs et chimères opiniâtres fantastiques et inconstantes.*' . . . '*Ma Femme est tellement perverse et outrageuse que je suis tout à fait las du lieu où elle est.*' He is up with her night after night, no soldier in a campaign gets less sleep, while he complains that he reaps none of the honour which at least rewards the soldier's toil. The poor woman takes knives and scissors to bed with her, and, in default of instruments of offence, swallows her silver thimble and a piece of glass. She assaults her husband with blows and kicks, and with a torrent of bad language which hurts him much more; he is afraid to leave her with her maids as she might injure them, or with any other man lest he should use the necessary force with less than the necessary gentleness. When his father implores him 'not to tie himself to so strict an attendance,' he accepts an invitation from Sir John Busby to go out hunting with him, and to dine at Addington. On his return he finds the house upside down, the maids crying and screaming, and his wife's hands bleeding from her successful efforts to break every pane in the latticed windows. On calmer days Mary haunts the churches and churchyards, and must have been no small trial to the preacher on Sundays. When Mun takes her to Middle Claydon, she waxes restless under the number of headings to which Mr. Butterfield's texts lend themselves, and goes out of church, but just as the worthy divine is reaching the application, she comes in again

to wander round the font and distract the attention of his hearers.

Mun is tormented by the infallible cures recommended for her, and 'would go from Dan to Beersheba to get her ease' though nostrums abound at his own door. The tenant of the Lawn Farm, Widow Scott, boasts of 'a secret powder that sends people to sleep for 3 or 4 days and nights in succession, after which they awake cured.' Old Judith is sent for, and her master conjures her to tell him 'whether she uses any manner of Charmes, Sorceries, or Magic whatever,' but she 'giving devout assurances to the contrary,' is allowed to try her experiment, 'which is only the head of a Jack Hare, wrapt in something, & hard bound about the Patient's Head for 3 or 4 days & nights together, and then to be taken off and put into the feathers of a pillow whereon the partie grieved must lye as long as they live.' Mun asks 'What sympatheticall vertue there may be in a melancholy Hare's Braine to draw away all Melancholie out of that of hayre-brained People?' but he adds 'it would be very pretty if so slight a thing should cure.' The woman desires Mary 'should be prayed for during six Sundays successively,' and Mun arranges 'to send bills to some by-church remote from all her relations, That a Person of condition who labours sorely under a melancholy distemper desires the prayers of the congregation,' but so sensitive is he on this point, that 'the partie' is to be nameless.

His steward Dover combines many confidential duties, including a little desultory teaching of the children, and a godly discourse on Sunday. The old Vicar, Maurice Gryffyth, resigned in 1663 and by his will ten years later left money for the education of East Claydon boys. His successor, the Rev. Hugh Hart, complains from the pulpit that his wife beats him, and is so far indisposed that he has to be revived with brandy. Dover is considered by the churchwardens to be a valuable stand-by.

Mun has found a man of similar gifts as a tenant for Sir Ralph's farm 'Stopp's Bargain in Middle Claydon, by name Teagle.' 'If honest Mr. Butterfield Be disabled through

Jan 80,
1671.

Jan. 7,
1678

Infirmity from Officiating, or that his sonne cannot Be Heard, He can Preach very audibly unto the Parishioners, though He Doth not care to do it in a Roome with a Steeple, yea & I am credibly informed that He is a Better Preacher then Mr. Rushford; I tooke notice He was Highly delighted to see my Man Dover who is a Brother Teacher in my ffamily; so that our two Parishes will Be Happily provided with Godly Speakers, who can Hold forth so powerfully to y^e People.'

During the first years of their marriage Edmund hardly ever left his unhappy wife, but as time went on her malady seems to have taken a gentler form, and she was content to remain at East Claydon, while he spent 'the Terme' with Sir Ralph in London. Dover kept him informed of the minutest household details, and his master writes him long confidential letters, which he forbids him to show his mother, 'who is a Sieve.' 'There be a Many Choif in my family, so you shall tell me How many or wch of them you conceive most lavish, & then I will order my admonition accordingly with circumspection that nothing may be ill taken from you.' 'You must not deny my wife at any time she is well, such a paltry sum as 1s., to play or divert her at cards.' Dover sends up snipe and other game. Edmund desires him to pay for 'a Partridge 8d., Larks & other small birds as Buntings, Fieldfares, Thrushes or Blackbirds (wch I value equally with Larks) 6d. a doz. & no more, for I can buy them so here, even multitudes,' though larks sometimes go up to 18d. a dozen. He sends his wife oysters from London, and returns a cloth 'with spratts in it for my family.'

A serious household complication arises when 'a Painter, one Harris,' employed in the White House, falls in love with Mary's favourite maid Jane, daughter of Matthew Avery of Quainton, and 'his Brother a joyner that wainscotted Mrs. Verney's Chamber entertaynes the like Passion for the same Party; the Party hath noe love for either of the brothers, but they are both unfeignedly in love with the party.' Edmund, possibly to make a diversion, asks leave for the painter to go down to Claydon House, to copy some of 'the Peeces' on

the walls; and when Sir Ralph not unaturally demurs, Edmund assures him that he does 'not desire that the Painter should Meddle wth any of Van Dykes Pictures: But That you Would Be pleased to Graunt Him Liberty to Coppy St John Baptist, Landskips, and Night Peecces Here, where I'll assure you grand Care shall Be Taken of Them.' Pretty Jenny finally makes choice of the genteeler brother, 'the Art Man,' and George Harris carries her off to Oxford; a year later her death is announced in her twentieth year.

Mun has visions of a waiting-gentlewoman, 'some discreet sightly body,' who shall exhibit, on a salary of 30*l*, virtues seldom seen in combination. She 'must not be young nor Hansom,' yet so well bred as to go with Mary into any company. When Mary is capable of giving orders the waiting-gentlewoman is to efface herself, at other times she is to curb the domestic expenditure, and guide the unruly team, without offending either the lawful driver or the driven. She is to make the master of the house comfortable according to his own views of comfort, and she must neither interfere with his habits nor gossip about them. Such a Phoenix, it would seem, existed only in the family crest, but Mun, and even Sir Ralph, sought for her in this wicked world with much faith and persistence. One maiden lady after another, whose cackling and fluttering were suggestive of a much homelier fowl, tried her hand at the work. The letters abound with her provocations and good intentions, and it is hard to say whether she gave more offence to her masters or to 'Nan Roades and Betty the Cookmaid,' whose 'cousins' made themselves much at home round the great open fireplace in the kitchen. When the gentlewoman's reforms, upstairs and downstairs, threatened to become intolerable, she would be summarily dismissed for what Mun called her plottings and intrigues against him, but being soon recalled by his remorseful good nature towards a poor relation, the tears and the quarrellings would begin afresh.

The children who are 'very hopeful' are their father's chief consolation, Ralph (b. 1666), Edmund (b. 1668), and Mary (b. 1675). But as 'the two little Esquires' become

more and more capable of mischief they add heavily to the burdens of the waiting-gentlewoman as soon as their father is out of sight. Even his threat 'to be about their eares when he comes home' fails to secure that they 'stirr not abroad without Cosen Bestney's leave.'

Little Ralph 'is very Briske, Lively, & full of Mettle,' but at ten years old 'he doth not mind his booke and hath profited nothing since he went to his Master, tho' the Child hath parts enough to Learne, he requires more paynes to be taken wth Him then many & his Master hath such abundance of Scholers that he hath not Leisure.' 'I know,' writes his father, 'that Rome was not Built of a Day, yett mee Thinkes some little Matter might bee done towards it' Baby Edmund draws Cousin Parkhurst's little girl as his valentine, and she wears his name in large letters, Mun is puzzled to know what present he should give to such a tiny sweet-heart.

April 28,
1679.

A sadder widower than Sir Ralph, he has to supply the place of both parents to his little ones 'Mis wants a nupper Coate,' his servant writes by his desire to a relation, 'and I have heere Inclosed a measure taken by a Tayler She also wants a Petty Coate or too, and a Copple of frockes, my m^r Understands not the fashones of Coller or stuff Therefore he Leaves those tlungs to you, but he doth not think Silck so Proper for soe Little a Child, and therefore is unwilling to goe to the cost, he sopesos Tammy or sum such kind of stuff most fitt for her and Genteele, my M^r desires you to Enquire what sort of Linen Sutes such Children ware and send him word.' He is very sensitive to kindness shown his little Molly; she has an 'historical pack of cards' sent her as a Christmas present at the discreet age of four, when Lady Hobart describes her as 'handsome & witty,' and she is credited with still more severe tastes at seven years old.

Dec. 25,
1682.

'Madam,' Edmund writes to Aunt Sherard, 'My daughter, y^r goddaughter, rec^d lately a noble present from you, a payre of sylver candlesticks, a curious fine Bible, & the whole Deuty of Man as fine, most Excellent and Best of Bookes, w^{ch} I Have charged Her to Reade & studdy carefully

& seriously with a gratefull Remembrance for ever of yr Ladyship, whose good and kind Designe for her welbeing in Giving These Things is appaent as well as yr generosity and Though she cannot yet write you her Thanks for Them her selfe, neverthelasse she Doth it now Here by my Penne, w^{ch} We most humbly Beseech your Ladyship to accept and Beleive that She Hath so much of her ffather in Her that she will bee, as I shall bee while I Breathe, Madam, Yr most perfect Honorer and humble servant.'

Edmund Verney holds his Court as Lord of the Manor of East Claydon, and attends the Sessions regularly and the Assizes. He has generally a law-suit in hand about boundaries and rights of way with the neighbouring squires, whom he considers 'very malicious & stomachfull,' when they disagree with him. To prevent Mr. Chaloner making 'an Inclosure' he buys up half a yard of land in Steeple Claydon at a high price, and 'the Halfe Cowes Common,' that he may be able to sell it again very dearly, if he should hereafter 'find cause to consent to the enclosure of the Common.' He is seen at militia levies, county elections and race-meetings, and--when he can find a horse to carry him--in the hunting field. He is a pillar of the Church, and prosecutes poachers and dissenters, as in duty bound, but he signs the Presentment of Papists and Nonconformists 'very unwillingly, hating to do anything like an Informer tho' never so legally.' He farms some of his own land at a loss, opposes the importation of Irish cattle with other squires whose estates are in 'the breeding counties,' entertains his neighbours with a lavish hospitality that he can ill afford, and generally supports the character of a country gentleman of the period.

Mun had never the strength of will to take his own line against his father's wishes; he had been absolutely dependent on Sir Ralph for money, and he was such 'an ill husband of his ressources' that his marriage with an heiress had not mended matters. Sir Ralph had been unwilling to let him become a soldier or sailor, or to pay his election expenses when he might have entered Parliament,

so he had some reason for the complaint he made as a youth, that his father would have him waste his life because he considered it a sufficient profession to be an eldest son.

Mun looked forward vaguely to his succession to Claydon, as a time when he would pay his debts and shake off the evil habits that were growing upon him; but no one was more truly anxious that his father's life should be prolonged, or more desperately unhappy than he was, when Sir Ralph was menaced by any ailment.

His life, though ill-regulated, was not a useless one; he was always doing kindnesses, and Nancy's nickname for him of 'Noble Soul' was generally current in the family, but he was stung at times with a sense that he was fitted for better things than he either attempted or achieved.

Mun's attention to the older members of the family made him a favourite with them all. Aunt Isham, who had played an important part in the lives of the young Verneys since their grandfather's days, came to Claydon in the summer of 1667. Her husband had given up the house at Wheatfield, near Thame, which they rented from the Tipping's, their only son Tom was at Merton College, and about to be called to the Bar, and for a time the old couple were without a home. 'Jugge' was so intent upon 'Pannie's' health (to use the familiar nicknames they never lost), she took scant notice of her own, but she was failing fast. Margaret Elmes, who was at Claydon, nursed her tenderly, and Sir Ralph made careful lists of her little bequests, which were many. Her ample pockets abounded with dainty implements; 'my little silver grater and my silver measure' are left to Sister Sherard, 'my diamond Bodkin to Mrs. Elisha Tipping but first put a stone in it,' 'To Mrs. Nancy Tipping my silver forke and my little gold ring with a posie Ever Constant; To Mrs. Victoria Tipping my best Peticoate; To my neece Nancy Nicholas my Haire Knot made with her father's and my husband's hairc.' Lady Tipping desires to have her Herbal. There are several bequests of plate, and of her 'pictures in little,' one of Sir Edmund Verney is left to 'Neece Adams,' and one of Dr. Denton to his wife. The

relations are so distressed about her, they long for letters ' & yet dread to open the next.' She died at Claydon House. Sept. 20, 1667
 Margaret Sherard, who considers that next her husband she could have no greater loss, thanks Sir Ralph for his 'great kindness to hir sister; she wanted for nothing that either phisition or friend could assist hir in. . . . God I hope will be a Comfort to her good blind Husband as she youste to cale him.' Dr. Denton writes: 'She lived & dyed a good Xstian and the best of us can doe no more.' She was buried in the beautiful Church at Hillesden where she had worshipped as a child, and where a monument is still eloquent on her merits: 'Pia Mater! Certa Amica! Optima Conjux!' The Church porch at Sandford-on-Thames also speaks for her.

'ELIZA ISHAM, 1652.

Thanks to thy charitie, religiose dame
 Who found mee olde and made mee new againe.'¹

'Pannie' survived her but two years and a half, and is buried at Wheatfield; her son, who died in 1676, aged thirty, lies beside her at Hillesden.

The members of a former generation were falling quickly one after another like a group of battered elm trees, and the most striking figure among them was cut off in the spring of 1668. Dame Ursula Verney belonged to an older world; married some seventy years before, in Elizabeth's days, she retained the grand manner of her time, and her end would not have been unworthy of the Tudor queen.² Her sharp tongue had kept relations at a respectful distance, and there were times when she was abandoned to the society of her parrots, but her numerous kindred gathered round her death-bed: 'Lady Hobart & 2 daughters, Pen Denton, & Margaret Elmos, Cousin Turvill, Lady Oakeled, Mrs. Betty Clarke, Lady Knightley & all her own family.' She had Feb. 1668.

¹ I am indebted for this information to Dr. Osmond Airy.

² There is a prescription among the Sloane MSS. in the British Museum of Dr. John Metford of Northampton 'Pro illustri Domina, Domina Verney octagenaria,' between 1652 and 1655.

bitter memories of Claydon: of her strong-willed mother, who had schemed for her so unhappily; and of the magnificent Sir Francis who had married her in childhood, and abandoned her as soon as they had both reached years of discretion; this she marked by not leaving the worth of a pair of gloves to Sir Ralph or his heir, nor a penny to the poor of the parishes whence her dowry had been so long derived. She desired on her death-bed to alter something in her carefully drawn will, and in presence of the awe-struck circle she gave her commands. The lawyer, pen in hand, listened obediently, her mind was clear, her will imperious, but the rattling in her throat made her vehement speech unintelligible, and so she passed away. Sir Ralph, who as the head of the family had constantly provided his old kinswoman with venison in obedience to her commands, was punctiliously anxious under the circumstances to show respect to her memory. His horses were 'out of tune,' but Mun provided a team; his wife seems to have accompanied them, and they drove together the long miles to attend Dame Ursula's funeral at Albury, where so many of their ancestors were already buried.

There was a constant interchange of civilities between Claydon House and the White House which must have laid a heavy tax on the smaller household. 'This day wee dined with your Brother,' writes Sir Ralph to John, '15 of us at our Table, and 11 servants, in all 26 persons, and truly wee were very plentifully provided for, my Cooke did it, and there was noe want of any thinge.' Nancy Nicholas remarks. 'I pety y^r pore Squire to have 26 persons to din wth him, you move like one of y^r Armis of Caterpilars & so maney of you have such good stomaks y^t I fancy y^u devoer all y^t is set before you.' Nancy, in spite of her gibes ('the Foole of the Family' as she calls herself), dearly loved to be included in Sir Ralph's large parties. 'The Gallery Chamber,' he writes to her, '& the little inward roome to it (wch were formerly Aunt Ishams quarter) are much at your service. the little wanscoatè next it, is for another & I hope my friends will bee content to crowd togeather both at Bed &

Board. Another time (when fewer meete) they shall lodg with more conveniency.' There were worse times still, when friends arrived at Claydon House to find Sir Ralph absent, and came on 'to the poor Squire' for a night's entertainment and the loan of his coach and horses. Sir Roger acknowledges 'the most easy conveyance' they gave him to my Lord Saye's. Another day 'Mr. Thos. Whantou passed by with my L^d Colchester in his Calash drawne by 6 horses, & my L^d Ossory went thro' nobly attended.' Sir Richard Temple alights and stays till the moon is up. 'My Lord Latimer's trumpeters' come from Buckingham 'on a begging complement,' and sound '3 or 4 Levites and as many points of War' in return for Edmund's largesse. So absolute are the claims of the most distant cousins to the hospitality of a country house that when Mun is unwell himself, and has decided 'not to keep Christmas,' he consults his father as to whether there is any polite way of declining a noisy party of youths who announce that they are coming from town to spend that season with him. Sir Ralph ponders the question, but writes at last, 'How to put off these young men is utterly unknown to me.'

Aunt Abercromby had lately died, and her son Jaconiah, with the blood of the truculent Scotch trooper in his veins, was a hard nut for the family to crack. They desired to pack him off by subscription to his kindred in Scotland, though they frankly said Jamaica would be better; he had a knack, like Tom, of coming back again from everywhere. Aunt Sherard expressed herself bluntly: 'My oppinion is y^t all is cast away on him; he was a brewte to his mother and I believe nothing will thrive with him except he repent of that.' Sir Ralph and Mun contributed to a fund from which Uncle Doctor helped him, keeping a tight hand on the purse strings. One summer evening, Jaconiah took his cousins at East Claydon by surprise, as Mun informs Sir Ralph.

'Vendredi environs dix heures du soir vint icy Abercromby June 6,
avec un Compagnon, qui avait la vraye mine d'un Filou, si 1670
jamais j'en vis Un; c'estait un Noiraut environ de 34 ou 35 ans,

avec ses Cheveux bien Courts (neammoins sans Peruque quoy-qu'il en avoit une dans sa Pochette, comme il me confessa apres) et tout le long des deux Costes anterieures de la Teste jusques à ses oreilles, ses cheveux estoient rognés avecques siseaux, il estoit Homme bien puissant et de plus grande Taille que mon Cousin, et estoit aussi fort beau & civil en son Deportement, et ressembloit un Gentil-homme beaucoup plus que Luy, il me dit que son Nom est Alured vulgairement appelé Aldredd, Fils d'un des juges du defeunct Roy selon le rapport d'Abercromy, & ils me dirent Tous deux qu'il vous est cogneu (autrement je ne les aurois pas logés) et qu'il a esté (à scavoir Aluredd) avec vous, et que vous le priasses en son Retour de regarder vos sources à Knowle-Hill, et que vous m'ekiriez ou à Holmes, pour les faire vuider, et puis luy montrer, car il pretend estre grand Ingenieur, et qu'il vint de Coventry, ayant esté là pour voir, s'il pouvait tirer l'eau en telle sorte, qu'elle n'incommodera pas ceux, qui travaillent dans la Fosse pour Charbons, le Barronett Smith luy ayant dit comment l'eau descoule; il me dit aussi qu'ils venaient de Glocester, et il me raconta outre cela, qu'il avoit esté eslevé sur la Mer 18 Ans, et qu'il a esté Lieutenant de Sir Jean Lawson nostre Vice-Admiral, et que son defeunct Frère aîné estait Gentilhomme de 800*l.* sterlins de Rente en Yorkshire, & qu'il avoit un autre Frère appartenant à la Loy dans Grays-Inne: mais pour moy je soubsonne grandement qu'il ment, nonobstant pour l'amour de tant de belles Histoires, le lendemain j'allay luy montrer vos Fontaines à Knowle-Hill, desquelles il prit la mesure avec grand soing, à cequi regarde leur profondeur, pretendant qu'il estait obligé à vous en rendre Conte: puis le mesme jour estant Samedy dernier environs 5 heures apres Midy, ils s'en allerent de Knowle-Hill vers Londres: ores je serois bien aise de scavoir si la verité de tout cecy vous est cogneu.'

Sir Ralph had agreed to their coming, and would like well to have water brought up to the house for a 'moderate charge,' but cannot find any way how to secure himself from loss if the engine broke down or was out of order 'as commonly such engines are'; Sir John Winter, who is

working in the Coventry coal mines, 'is like to lose all his labour & his charges too.'

The manners of some of the guests are alarmingly boisterous 'This is no inviting wether to y^e Vaill of Alsbury,' writes Nancy Nicholas on a damp autumn day, 'I hope y^t y^r dep cuntry will make you all of a more pascable temper yⁿ ye have bin at New Market for there both y^r Men among y^m selfs & y^e women among y^m selfs have had great Quarils.'

Mun was abundantly feasted in return for his hospitalities. He is 'invited to eate Venison at Mr. Rocheforts, the Parson of Addington,' and he is in constant request with Sir Richard Pigott, the Dormers, the Temples at Stow, Sir William Smith at Radclive, and Sir Peter Tyrrell. Sir Thos. Lee of Hartwell is 'a man of great state.' 'We were but 3 at Table,' Mun writes to Sir Ralph, who is laid up in town, 'yet our Treate was to that Degree of Magnificence that to relate the particulars to any sick person would be offensive, so I forbore.' He also receives 'furious & noble entertainment' at Hillesden, where Alexander Denton considers he can never have sufficient 'lodging guests,' and his beautiful wife Hester is of the same opinion.

There is much eating and drinking in Mun's correspondence. Dr. Denton has a picturesque banquet: 'All ye gange was here last night drinking Sir Ralph's health & preying on a goodly formidable beast out of y^e Fens called a Bustard, w^{ch} was more then a whole round table & by standers could devoure, When will Barley yard or Knowle Hill produce such a Beast?' 'I pray, good Mun,' writes Sir Ralph anxiously, 'keepe goode Howers, both for eating & sleeping, & bee very Temperate, for many dye of Pleurisies, after a fit of Good fellowship . . . & the excesses of last Christmas have sent many into another world.' Mun agrees: 'me semble que le Monde dans ce Temps icy se haste grandement d'aller à l'Autre,' but he does not mend his ways; though he is severe upon other people's imprudences: 'Lady Hobart might happily spinne out her Thredd of life a long while yet, if she do not cut it off by quality & quantity of Dyet.'

March 16,
1675.

Lady Gardiner laments that 'there be such revellings and gaming in the Inns of Court at Christmas time,' that it is dangerous to allow Jack to remain in town. Sir John Busby and his lady and other friends meet at the White House, and after the early dinner, play cards till midnight. The next day Edmund takes over his party to dine at Addington, 'after which we fell to cards and continued playing till 9 a'clock' the following morning.

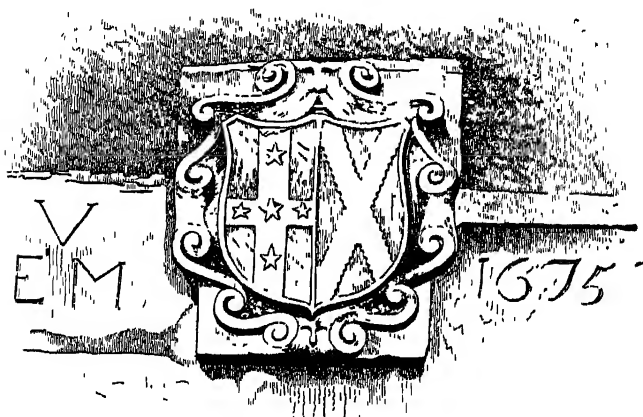
Aug. 26,
1875

This is his account of a Bucks wedding: 'I dined at Stow yesterday Nelly Denton & Jack Stewkeley went wth mee: Wee met S^r Harry Andrewes, & his Lady & Daughter his only Child There, as also Cosen Risley & his Lady & Jack Dodington, & 3 Sisters of Lady Temple, & Mr. Stanion, Husband to one of them, & Nedd Andrewes and Grosve his Father in Law, & Thom. Temple & an other old Temple wth 3 or 4 Very Drunken Parsons, w^{ch} made up our Company, Lady Baltinglasse was invited & promised to be there but fayled, Wee saw S^r Richard & his ffine Lady wedded, & flung the stockin, & then left Them to Themselves, and soe in this manner was Ended the celebration of his Marriage à la mode, after that, wee hadd Musick, Feasting, Drinking, Revelling, Dancing & Kissing: it was Two of the Clock this Morning Before wee Gott Home.' Sir Ralph thought Mun's news 'so pleasantly related I have read it over & over.'

Sir Ralph exacted in his own house a strictly modern standard of sobriety, but Lady Gardiner, in giving a servant's character, thought it high praise that she 'could not hear that Tom was given to drink more then whot natur requiared.' In Mun's household, 'Nature' always made large demands on the cellar. When John, after his return from the East, owned land in Berkshire, the brothers compared notes: Mun writes: 'Y^r Arrabian Deserts as you call Them, are much More Cleanely than our dirty Country, & if you knew our People here as well as I do, you would ffind Them ffull as Irreligious & Brutish, as y^r People of Wasing, & perhaps more savage then the wild Heathenish Indians, For a Tenant of Myne, an old Man, at an Easter Comunion

drank up all the wine in the sylver Callice & swone it: would have his Peny worth out of it: Being he payd for it By which you may see what manner of Men wee are in these Parts. I do not Think that among the Infidels, this story can be Matcht.'

But in spite of times of depression Edmund took an interest in his country life. He and his wife rebuilt the village inn, which with its high-pitched roof is still so picturesque a feature of East Claydon, with their shield and initials and the date over the door. Sir Ralph suggests



that a woman might keep the inn as well as a man '2 boards Aug. 25
in a room will serve for a table, & for Bedsteads, bedding, 1675.
Linen, pewter & brass a little will serve at first.' Mun has
his father's love of planting, and is getting black cherry
stocks from the Chilterns at three halfpence or twopence
apiece to graft choice kinds upon them, and crabstocks from
'my Lord Scudamore's in Herefordshire where the best
grow.' Vines imported from Blois produce grapes in Sir
Ralph's garden, and Edmund is laying out 'a Little Viniard
about two single Rowes of an Acres Length by Way of an
Essay, but not to doe as Noah did afterwards'; he has

a small pack of beagles who turn the kitchen spits when nobler sports fail, and we hear of pheasant-hawking in Runt's Wood. He knows every man and boy about the place, visits the old women who are sick, and sees to their funerals.

'I have informed y^e poore Evill People as much as I can concerning their being touched: though her Majestie bee ill, yet she is soe very good, that I am confident shee will Live eternally, happen to Her what can Here an Earth': 'Me seroit infiniment mieux dans les cieux, que sur cette Angleterre.'

Like his father, he has a great capacity for taking trouble, and writes numberless letters to get his men places, or to help on the village boys. One of these he has apprenticed, paying 5*l.* and giving him a good outfit of clothes. 'Nedd is so thick-skulled a fellow without any apprehension, & so indoseble, a cook is the easist trade he can think on for him,' but he proves 'very wavering': 'now that Nedd hath bin with Fosket he hath a mind to be a barber, then if he should smoll out Will Scott's sweet shopp his mind will turn to be a perfumer, & so as oft as he spyes any new trade, whereas God watt his stupiditie will find it a hard Taske to learn one, therefore seeing he is such a Nass, he must be drove to understanding of it—& that if he doth not stick to sum thing he will com to nothing.' The master cook suggests that if the boy 'can neither write, read nor cast,' these three things might be useful to him, and offers to share with the Squire the cost of having him taught; meanwhile the boy refusing to scrape trenchers till his articles are signed, Edmund can only wish that the cook would baste him soundly with his ladle, he must be taught something 'be it butcher, cobbler, tincker or goldfinder, . . . if nothing of all this will doe, he must down in the Contry & be doomed to be a perpetuall hewer of wood & drawer of water & so ware a foole's coat & collars if he can yarne it.'

Jan. 1676.

Sir Ralph has a queer story to send: 'My Queen in Hampshire (that was soe handsome) is newly dead, and that very strangely; it seems she and another Lady (a particular

friende of hers) agreed that which of them soeuer died first, should give notice to the other of the Time she should Dye. And this friend of hers died severall yeares past. And about 6 or 8 Weekes since my Queen came to Preshaw, and stayed a fortnight or 3 weekes there, and was as merry, and looked as hansomly and as cheerfully as could bee, and went well away. And 3 dayes after, on a sudden she cried out that her friend now called her, and she must dye very soone, uppon which she immediately fell distracted, and is since Dead, and if this bee not strange, I know not what is. . . . I have now sent you one Dozen of Lemons, and 3 Dozen of Oranges in a Basket, covered with Napkin: I pray send the napkin to Lilly, for I have sent her word you will send it her, and tell me if she hath sent you your cloath that came upp with the Turkey and Bacon.'

Edmund is not to be outdone: 'The Death of the ^{Jan 10,} Queene in Hampshire is somewhat strange. We have as ^{1676.} Strange a story of a black-smith of Stratten-Audley coming well in Health over Brackley Greene on Horseback: a Dogg with a Paper in his mouth mett Him, and Leapt up to Him so often, that at length He tooke the Paper and flung it away, whereupon the Dogg Leapt up at Him againe, and pinched Him by y^e shoulder, after which He came Home, and fell madd, and so Died, and the paper with bloody Characters which no Body could Read was found in his Chamber. I humbly thank you for the Lemons and Oranges you sent me, but the Carryer left them behind him.'

When we turn to the comments Edmund makes on public affairs, we find his knowledge of them to be far more intimate than anything Macaulay is willing to allow to the 'rustic aristocracy.' He discusses with Sir Ralph the campaigns of Louis XIV., the advance of the Turks against Austria, the politics of Denmark and Sweden, the articles of peace with Algiers, the condition of the West Indies, the Levant trade, and our relations with the Dutch, whom he detests. Sir Ralph gets him the latest published map of the seventeen provinces.

There are constant jokes at the expense of the country

March 5,
1668.

cousins, but they are well informed on all the questions of the day. Dr. Denton writes: 'Most excellent Clowne, that is glad his well-bred horses can run noe faster than an ordinary Cow can trot. It were a good deed to send you noe newes, for that reason, & because there is little, you shall know but little. The great debate was yesterday about the Phanaticks & wonderful tugging there was, the result at last was that the King should be desired by the H. of C. to sett out his proclamation for putting the lawes in execution ag^t Papists, Phanaticks, etc. Y^e coz. of Ormond is coming over . . . this is newes enough for a hob-nail-clowne.' This note is addressed 'For Calfe Raph the Cow-house of Claydon.' As a matter of fact they all come up for 'the Terme,' and Cary mentions it as a great grievance that her 'young company have been kept above 3 years out of London.' Any event of note at Court or in the City finds its way in due time to the White House, accidents apart—for the carrier's cart has been known to break down, bogged, benighted in Quainton Marsh, when the mail was entirely lost; another time an Aylesbury waggoner perceives the letters 'in the cart rout when his wheel was just a going over them' and brings them on. The Grand Duke Cosmo of Tuscany was magnificently entertained by the Dukes of Albemarle and Buckingham. Edmund remarks that the Italians have 'far more aptitude for self-government than we Northerners have'; he wishes that the example of decorum and simplicity set by this great prince might be taken to heart in England, and most of all by himself. Mun was elaborately respectful to the severer Virtues, with whom he had only a bowing acquaintance.

Sept. 7,
1669.

Dr. Denton gives us one more glimpse of 'la Reine Malheureuse,' Henrietta Maria. 'The night the Queen Mother died she called for her will, said she did not like it, tore off the seals, said she would alter it to-morrow; she complained much of want of sleep, so an opiate was ordained her, & her physician watched with her to give or not to give it to her, he did not like to give it her, but her impatience extorted it from him, & she died that night.'

The year 1670 opened with the death of Monk, whose name for ten years had been in all men's mouths as the man to help in any crisis: 'On Mounday morning my Lord Generall died,' Sir Ralph writes to Mun, ' & left 1,200*l.* per ann: in land, & 18,000 Pounds in Money besides what the Dutches hath in Plate, Jewellery, & in her Privy Purse. tis beleeved she will never come out of her chamber, being so farre Gon in a consumption. Hee desired the King to give his soune after him, the Lord Lieutenantcy of Devonsheire, and that hee might bee of his Majesties in his Roome, and enjoy his Lodgings at Whitehall. . . . The King sent a Garter to the Young Duke, as soone as his Father was dead, and will bury him at his owne charge, hee is to lie in State at Somerset House, and there is a committee appointed to consider of all things for the Funerall . . . hee was cured of his Dropsie, but had something like an Anchois growne in one of his Arteries which stoped the Passage of his Blood, wh: the Phisitians call soo many hard names, that I can neither write, nor remember them. Mr. Gape was present when the Body was opened. . . . The Young Duke being married on Thursday last to my Lord Ogles Daughter, & grandchilde to the Duke of Newcastle, is not like to bee so thrifty as his Father. . . . The King, Qucen, Duke, & Dutches, have made theire condoling visits to the Widdow Dutches.' Mun writes: 'Nostre generalissime Monk estoit un homme de bien et brave toutafait, & qui la nation estoit beaucoup obligée, et ainsi doit faire dueil comme ayant perdu sa principale gloire.' Jan 5,
1670.

A fortnight later Margaret Elmes died suddenly at Mr. Gape's house in town. Edmund and Mary lost in her a warm friend. At Preshaw they 'are all immersed in tears & sorrow,' and his friends are anxious about the effect of this shock on Sir Ralph's health, 'tho' to be unhappy,' Lady Gawdy asserts, 'is as natural as to be.' Cary writes to her nephew: 'The death of my deare sister Elmes hath bin a great troble to mee and I dar say so it was to y^r fathar, for wee three took most comfort in each othar, though ther is four besids us, bot I recon now shee is gone our knot is broken.' There was Jan 19,
1670.

a family gathering at Claydon for her burial; the Rector's fee was 'a gold piece called a guinea,' then first coming into use.

Cary, left executor and residuary legatee, protests that she loves not to run headlong on her own judgment, and does her best to conciliate the family and to carry out her sister's wishes; she divides the clothes between Peg's maid and her sister Betty Adams, and behaves most unselfishly, only to find she has pleased nobody. Mr. Gape's charges for medical attendance and embalming seem on a scale more suited to his last great patient, the Duke of Albemarle, than to so thrifty a subject as Dame Elmes. Sir Thomas is as unreasonable about her death as he has been about every action of her life, and sends Cary a lawyer's letter to assure her that his late wife had no power to make a will at all. 'I have rit to my brother Elmes as modarately as I could frame my selfe to doe, he provoking mee so much About my poor Sister. Should I have saide les, I beleve hee woud think her friends ware afraid of him and make him the more back-word, bot my opinion is that he will not pay a peny till he is sued.'

When in recent years the family vault underneath the chancel of Middle Claydon Church was opened, a mummy-shaped coffin was seen standing upright. The name on it was 'Margaret Elmes,' and John Webb the carpenter, on seeing it, observed that he now understood the tradition he had heard as a child, that one of the Verneys was buried thus, because she said 'she had been upright in her life and would be the same in death.' It was a curious means that the poor woman took to vindicate her reputation.

Feb. 16,
1670.

Sir Ralph was due in London for the marriage of the son of the Master of the Rolls to 'M' Attorney General's daughter'; he writes to Mun, 'Our great wedding will bee over to morrow at night, & then I shall have more leasure. I have been Munday & Tuesday at Kensington, & never thinke of Bed till 2 or 3 a clock in the Morning. Tomorrow tis kept at the Roles with great magnificence.' He had sought to be excused, but he was a guest too much valued

to be let off. 'I am glad you were overcome,' writes Lady Gawdy, 'to be in the company of your friends; Sorrow is too harde for us alone, and your nature so pensive, and your reason so just, as if you were left to yourselfe, I feare you would indolge sadnes too much.'

Archbishop Sheldon, formerly Rector of Ickford, Bucks, was exhorting 'to conformity,' and there were epidemics of persecution against Nonconformists and Quakers, but the Verneys did not readily share in the panics due to what Dr. Denton styled 'Chimeras of Phanaticisme.' Sir Ralph wants 'to comprehend soe many Dissenters as possible in a Toleration Act' He writes to Mun, 'Wee had need take
Feb 27, 1672.

The most interesting event of the year 1670 is the arrival of the fascinating Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans. Edmund could not estimate, as we can, the political importance of her visit, but the fame of her goodness, her beauty, and her charm of manner reached East Claydon. 'The
Mar 11, 1670.

King,' Sir Ralph writes, 'sent to invite his sister, Madame, to London, but tis impossible she should come, for she will not yeild the Place to y^e Dutchesse of Yorke, nor can it bee allowed that the Dutchesse of Yorke should yeild it unto her.' This difficulty is solved a few days later in Henrietta's favour. 'The King & Duke are at Dover with Madame theire Sister, & this morning the Queen & Dutchesse goe thetherwards, to Visit her, all the Towne is gonn, & the Kings Musicke, & Duke's players, & all the Bravery that could bee got on such a sudden. The Dutchesse is to give the Place to Madame in this kingdome, because the Duke of Orleans alwaies gave it to the Duke of Yorke in France.' . . . 'I heare the King sent the Earle of St. Albans to the
May 25, 1670.

K. of France, to get leave that his Sister might stay a few daies longer in England, & that she might come to London, & I beleeve tis granted, & that they will all bee heere from Dover this Evening or to morrow, for the whole Court is weary of that place. Heere will bee all the bravery & Jollity that England can well afford, & more then will bee

payd for, in hast. Just now a friend came in, & tells mee all is crossed againe, & that there is noe leave granted, soe that our Bravery is like to bee at an End, but tis certaine Lady Castlemaine hath farre Exceeded all the French Ladies both in Bravery, & Bewty too.'

June 6,
1670.

Mun writes: 'Si Madame durant son sejour parmi nous a faict la Paix entre Tant de Monde icy, sans doutte elle est retournée du moins avec cette Beatitude, d'avoir L'honneur d'estre appelée l'enfant du bon Dieu.' The country is still under the spell of that gracious presence when, as Sir Roger expresses it, 'We are heer all startled at the news of the Dutchess of Orleans death.' Mun writes: 'Je condole fort la mort subite et inopinée de Madame, c'estoit une brave Princesse, et très illustre, je soubsonne beaucoup qu'elle a esté empoisonnée, et si cela se pouvait trouver, et que le Roi fut de mon humeur, il attempera Revenge. Je me repens a cet heure que j'ai fait mes habits de couleur, et puisque ce Malheur devait arriver, je souhaite qu'il fut venu auparavant que je les eu faits, ou apres qu'ils furent froissés.' It is a proof of the sorrow felt in England for the death of the Princess, that Mun should feel it necessary at East Claydon to put himself into mourning. Death allowed Henrietta Stuart the precedence which had been so hotly contested in an earthly court, and then Anne Hyde also received her summons.

June 26,
1670.

April 6,
1671.

Dr. Denton writes: 'The Duchess of Yorke died on Friday, opened on Satterday, embalmed on Sunday & buried last night. I know y^a longe to be satisfied whether Pro: or Pa: of w^{ch} ye towne speakes variously. by ye best & truest intelligence she did not dy a Papalina, but she made noe profession or confession eyther way. Her last acts were these, she dined hartily att Burlington house on Thursday before, and that night accordinge to custom she was about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an houre att her owne accustomed devotions and at her returne from Burlington house she called for her Chaplyn Dr. Turner to pray by her, ye Queen & ye Duke were private with her an hour or more on friday morninge & noe Preest, but Father Howard & Fa: Patrick were

attendinge accordinge to theyr duty on ye Queene in ye next roome. Ye Duke sent for ye Bpp of Oxon out of ye Chappell, who came, but her senses were first gone, in ye meane time ye Duke called "Dame doe ye know me," twice or thrice, yⁿ with much strivings she said "I" after a little respite she took a little courage & with what vehemency & tenderness she could she said "Duke, Duke, death is very terrible," which were her last words, I am well assured that she was never without 3 or 4 of her women soe that it was impossible a Priest could come to her.' The Duchess had been nursed with 'extraordinary sedulity' by a young maid of honour, Margaret Blagge¹ (afterwards Mrs. Godolphin), who had been from her childhood in the Duchess's service. She sorrowfully contrasted this scene with her own mother's devout death, who 'ended her life chearfully, left her family in order & was much lamented.' 'A princess honoured in power, with much witt, much money, much esteeme, was full of unspeakable tortur & died (poore creature) in doubt of her Religion without the Sacrament or divine by her, like a poore wretch. The dead Duchess none remembered after one weeke, none were sorry for her, she was tost & flung about, & every one did what they would with that stately carcase.'

Two years later 'the Duke has gone and many Popish Lords with him to meet the new Duchesse at Dover, Crow Bishop of Oxford went to marry them, they come to Whitehall by water, & so there will be no show in the city.' Sir Ralph remarks, after Mary of Modena has been a few months in England, that the new Duchess is better looking than he ever thought she would be; and thus is Anne Hyde, the mother of two English Queens, quite forgotten. Nov. 20,
1673.

During all these years the old affectionate intercourse was kept up with the Burgoynes. Sir Roger was godfather to Edmund's eldest boy, and Sir Ralph's visits to Wroxall and Sutton were the events of the year to his devoted friend. Sir Roger's old age was brightened by the love of his second wife, Anne Robinson of Dighton, Yorkshire, who brought

¹ *Life of Mrs Godolphin*, by John Evelyn, ed. Bp. of Oxford, 1847.

him another family of children. She was a capable and accomplished woman, but no one's opinion weighed with Trusty Roger, when Sir Ralph's was to be had. The proportions of the new terrace, the provisions of his will, the colour of a waistcoat, and the filling up of a living await his decision. And when Sir Roger is thrown 'into some small confusion' by finding that a guest 'who came unexpectedly on Saturday with my brother John, expresses a kindness for my daughter, tho' he hath not yet spoke with me about it,' he hastens to lay all the probabilities before his friend. When Mr Simmons is accepted, Sir Ralph must pronounce upon the trousseau, and choose the wedding-clothes. 'One coloured & two black gownes are to be made for the bride: what kinds of silk and lace should be got for the best black? what for the second, as also for the Couler'd that must beare the name of a wedding one, though not to be worn till the day after? what lace for the best handkerchief, points being out, & what value? I doubt the old fellow must have a new vest and tunick for the credit of the lass. if any I must desire you to provide materialls of all sorts according to yo' own fancy, and I promise you they shall be liked provided not too deare. I am for black: having made me an ordinary stuff one very lately: I would have one for my sonn if I knew what. He has a stuff one newly made, but I would have another against that time, he is now going to Cambridge.' A few days later: 'My wife as myselfe acknowledges your favours having rec'd the things you sent, the hatt is very fitt, and my wife so much approves of the lace as to think it too good for hir selfe to weare, but I am apt to believe all women will be soon weaned from such thoughts, only shee desires to know what it costs.' Lady Burgoyne's point-lace came to 5*l.* 12*s.*, and the cuff-lace to 2*l.* 3*s.*

June 1667.

Sir Ralph was at Wroxall considering the many questions his host had pigeon-holed in his mind for the enjoyment of a personal discussion, when he heard that Henry was very ill, 'deeply gon in the Glanders' as Pen expressed it. But a few days before he had written to complain of a Claydon



SIR ROGER BURGOYNE, BART.

haunch of venison, which though 'my Lady Hobart had cookt it with vinegar, noe flesh could abide the smell of, but I & my friends will drinck your health & make mery with it as much as my health will give mee leave.' Sir Ralph hurried home 'as fast as his man's falling sickness would allow,' and there found the news of Henry's death, which distressed him extremely. He had left all to Pen, and she wished him buried at Claydon, provided she could be laid beside him, which Sir Ralph heartily agreed to. Pen put up a handsome monument to his memory, which she tried to make Sir Ralph pay for—very shabbily, the relations thought—but she is mad and will demand things.' Aug. 28,
1671.

Edmund wrote to John at Aleppo: 'For domestic newes I shall acquaint you that my Uncle Henry Verney and my father's Cooke honest Michael Durant are both lately dead.' The adjective was reserved for the cook, whom in truth he considered the more valuable man. 'Misho,' as Claydon called him, had served his master, man and boy, for about twenty years, and such was his fame that no wedding breakfast, or funeral supper, or Christmas feast in the neighbourhood was felt to be adequate without his supervision.

The 'loyal & indigent' Colonel left behind him a bag of money in the Doctor's care, which the latter estimated to contain at least 700 guineas, if not 1,000; he had remarked genially that there were some gilt shillings in it. Penelope, who had learnt thrift in a hard school, took her family by surprise shortly after, by her marriage with 'Sir John Osborn K^t of Devonshire,' and still more by the announcement that she was worth 6,000*l*. 'I never heard of a more Joyed woman than my Sister Osborne,' writes Cary, 'I feare her good fortune will make all old women marry.'

'Pen was always a great scraper,' remarked a relation less happily gifted, 'but I thought she had not been so great a getter; S^r John is so high already in her opinion & affection she is like to prove a good wife to him, however she is for a Sister or an Aunt'; and the prediction was

verified. Lady Osborne had apartments 'on the stairs in Whitehall,' frequented the Court, kept her coach, and lived more than twenty years in the enjoyment of this evening sunshine, which she thoroughly appreciated

1672.

The Dutch War has broken out, and Edmund is fretted by his own inaction. He had always been attracted by the Navy, and he seemed to know by instinct the names and tonnage of our ships, and their stations. Being very wroth at our naval disasters, and at what he deemed the cowardice and incapacity of our officers; unwieldy as he was, and more likely to sink a boat than to fight her, he suddenly resolved to volunteer. He had spoken to his father on the subject, but he makes an earnest appeal to him in writing; he feels the war a righteous one, and is ashamed to be out of the Fleet now that the Her-apparent is engaged in it. He remembers the services of his grandfather and his glorious end, and that he was pleased to bestow his own name upon him at his baptism; he would seek deliverance in active service from all that he feels unworthy in his present life, and he earnestly begs his father's assistance in this—a turning-point in his life. But it was a wild project at best, an attempt to wrest out of the hand of Time the years of youth that had slipped away from him, and to the reasonable and unwarlike Sir Ralph it seemed too preposterous a plan for discussion. 'Mun, I pray say noe more of your desires to goe into the Fleet, unlesse you have a minde to render mee & your children miserable.' To make amends for his curt refusal he writes Mun a longer letter than usual, with all the news he specially cares to hear; he does not think 'the Hollander soe easy a bit to swallow' as some do, 'the little Victory, a shipp of 38 guns and 250 men was unhappily taken by the Dutch fleet. Capt. Fletcher commanded her & is very ill-spoken of, for hee yielded without shooting one Gunn. . . . Tis beleeved the Dutch will fight under decks, that is only with cannon, for they want men & are affrayed to lose those they have. . . . Seamen & Watermen are daily impressed, there are 400 Men now sent out of the Guards, to supply

May 1672.

the shupps, till the Irish come upp, whom we hear are now landed.' There is a further story of the Kent frigate of 50 guns, 'lost within 3 leagues of Harwich. The seamen beleeve she was bewicht, they tell stories of a crow hovering over them 2 days together in stormy weather &c. only ye captaine & 11 men saved.'

The letters meant to daunt Mun's ambitions, only roused them the more, but he bows to his father's will: '*je choisirai d'offrir violence à mon genie, et ainsi passer ma vie comme un Faisnéant plus tôt que comme un fils desobeissant*'; he pours out his pent-up wrath on Capt. Fletcher, whom he longs to see shot, and then relapses into the ordinary routine of his life in the heavy clay of his native county, '*ou je suis empestre parmi mes yviongues de Paisans*.'

Clarendon's name occurs frequently in Mun's letters, but his fall is referred to with less sympathy than he had a right to expect from the family of an old friend and colleague. The younger generation were more impressed by the Lord Chancellor's haughtiness than by his high principles. Mun thought his position unassailable, and that it was rash to show your teeth to so big a beast, unless you were prepared to bite to the bone. He always sided with the King whoever might be against him, and considered a fallen Minister to be necessarily in the wrong. When, after weary years of exile, the grand old Cavalier died abroad, the rancour against him suddenly subsided, he was buried in Westminster Abbey, 'Sir Ralph was one that held up his Pall, he was met by the Dean (in his episcopal habit) & Chapter, who sung him to his grave.' Jan. 7, 1675.

'Your friend Clarendon has lost his key,' writes Dr. Denton of his son; 'the pretence was that he struck the guard,' who had denied him admittance to a play acted at Court, the house being full. 'Other reasons are guessed,' for 'a L^d Chamberlain was never before turned out for striking a yeoman of the guard.' April 25, 1675.

The grand manners of the courtiers are offensive to the plain country gentlemen, and this little bit of gossip is much appreciated: 'ye Duke of Somerset visitinge Ambassador

Aug. 30,
1675.

Berkeley, he rec^d him wth great State keepinge his chaire of State wth his hatt on; y^e Duke in his returne meets wth the Earle of Shrewsbury, going to Berkley to whom my Lⁱ relatinge his reception said, he w^d be even wth him who on approaching was rec^d after y^e same manner (viz wth out calling for a seat or being spoken unto to putt on his hatt) but he reach't his owne scat, putt on his hat, & sate close to him, wⁿ he tooke his leave, Berkely told him he had affronted him. Shrewsbury answered y^t he knew how to treat him in his publiq & private station, & y^t he might know y^t at home, he was a better man than himselfe.' The chief foreign news is the death of the great French general 'by a cannon shot from an ambuscade' 'The French King says little but Jesus Maria, & beats his breast, wch when he observes any to take notice on it, he then laments the loss of his dear friend Turenne.'

Feb. 19,
1678.

In 1673 there is a brief reference to the break-up of a very happy home. 'Just now S^r Nathaniell Hobart died, & doubtlesse hee is a Blessed Saint in Heaven.' Sir Ralph was Lady Hobart's chief stay during her husband's very painful illness, and in all her mourning. He writes again: 'Our Deare friend S^r Nathaniell was decently buried on Satterday at 10 in the night, in the Temple Church, none were invited, but the houre being knowne, many of his friendes came to attend him to his grave.'

July 6,
1675.

Before long he is called upon to comfort one still dearer to him. 'This morning it pleased Almighty God to call to his mercy the soule of my good Aunt Denton, to the greate grieve of my deare Uncle D^r & all that knew her. Shee died in a good old Age, without any paine, or sicknesse, & had her senses to the last or very neare her last.' Katherine Denton was buried 'in the chancell of St. Margaret's Westminster,' possibly in a vault belonging to her first husband's family, where a monument to John Birt (or Bert), Protonotary of the King's Palace, 1638, is described by Stow.

The Rev. Edward Butterfield continued his labours as rector of Middle Claydon, aided in his declining years by his

son William, who, after spending five years at Oxford, left with an M.A. degree and was ordained by the Bishop, Dr. Compton, in 1675. On his father's death in 1678, he applied to Sir Ralph for the living, who returned him a 'doubtful answer,' desiring first to see him married. William Butterfield was a youth singularly amenable to good advice. Having no preferences, he consulted the patron as to a suitable partner, and Sir Ralph recommended Mistress Sarah Lovett, 'A Person of that Excellent Form, and Wit and Family as to command the greatest admiration and esteem.' Edmund Verney, who took a kindly interest in the young parson, writes: 'Mr. Will. Butterfield Goes A Wooing Jan. 2,
1679. Might & Mayne to Mr^s Lovet: Hee expects a New Hatt to morrow from London, soe Hee would have putt of his journey to His Amata untill that came; but I offered to Lend him Myne, for that Delayeres were Dangerous, & this Morn^s He intended for Ethrop without a new one, Myne not fitting him.' He was tossed about like a shuttlecock, between Father Lovett—who would only promise him his daughter when he should be Rector of Claydon—and Sir Ralph, who would think about it after, but not before, his marriage. He was a good deal bewildered, and never quite understood how he finally came to acquire both the living and 'my now dear Wife,' but he was clear that had he consulted his own wishes he would neither have been ordained nor married. There is a droll pathos in the situation; but William Butterfield fulfilled both vows as an honourable man, and inherited his father's popularity at Claydon.

There was a good deal of paternal government in the cottages, carried out by squire and parson, with a firm but kindly hand. We get glimpses of the village life in Edmund's letters to Sir Ralph.

'Last Satterday Night There Bessell a most sadd and Jan. 29,
1677. lamentable Accident unto yr Tenant William Taylour, His House is Burnt Downe to the Ground and very little saved that was in it. He Hadd a Calf and a Cow Burnt, this Mischance Happened by Heating of their oven as They

conceive. I sent my Man Wood This morning to see in what condition They are, and his children have never a rag to cover them. I sent them in my Cart a ffull Barrell of Beare & Gave Them my Barrell also. This misfortune makes me Apprehend some Mischeif from our Church House, wherein There are fhoure ffamilies That make ffires without a Chimney aganft wattled walls only Daubed over with Mortar, There is one Common Chimney in the sayd House, but None of Them will use it, because Every One will Be private: yet my ffather-in-law Abell made Them use ffire no where but in their common Chimney, when There were as many ffamilies in the Churchhouse as there are now. This Church or Wake House stands upon Ground Given to y^e Church, and thereare 4 or 5 Lands in y^e field without Common Given to repaire it, Let for about five Nobles a yeare, all wch is in the Disposall of the Church Wardens, but I Beleive They Do misapply that income to save Their Purses so farr as t'will go from Relieving the Poore: and That is the Reason that the very House is so much Decayed, through their willfull Neglect. . . . They suffer the now Dwellers to Do what They please to the great Hazard and Danger of Taking ffire.'

One of Edmund's men sends him 'some very good lace' which his daughter has made. He gives the lace-worker a guinea, Betty 'makes it up into a cravatt' of the new mode, and he intends to 'make himself fine with it at Christmase.'

Edmund rejoices in the detection of the 'Cooper who hath stole a greate many of the best Pales from Sr William Smith's Park, to make Coopery ware,' and of other sturdy vagabonds, 'who come with Dogg & Gunne, Perching, Pochung & killing Pheasants in y^e Woods & mine. Sir John Busby told me How He committed one Smith of Oakely to the Goale. Twas He that cheated young John Hicks. He is a Very Rogue I believe but whether any thing can be proved aganft Him sufficient to Hang Him Time must Try, it is sayd That He Hath maliciously Killed a World of Cattle & perticularly above 100 Cowes in the Oakely Parish

where He Dwelt with one Eustace a Butcher There, who divided the advantage thereby with Him. it is Reported He Hath stollen Horses too.' The rough justice the squires administered sounds harsh to us, but when a servant of Edmund's is ill he can always command 'the best the house can afford'; at East Claydon a sick man is moved into the guest-chamber in order to have a fire. In London his foot-boy 'Dick is fallen sick, and in all liklyhood will Have the smale Pox, I sent Him out of this House yesterday in a Chayre (& that a Sedan) to a Good Nurse-keeper who Tended my Lady Gardiner's Children: my uncle Doctor Denton Hath Been with Him and is his Physitian, if He were my owne Child I could do no more for Him, He shal want for Nothing'

Sir Ralph takes a deep interest in his little grandsons, and keeps one of Ralph's first letters, endorsing it 'from Little Master with a basket,' when the child sends his 'humble dutys' and 'A few Puddins.'

Mun consults him about their schooling. Ralph is at Mr. Blackwell's school at Bicester.

'I went unto Water Stratford unto one M^r Masons House the Minister and Schoole Master There, to see what accom-
 Feb 19, 1678.
 modation There was for my Boy Mun in case I put Him There to Schoole, my Man Wood's Mother dwells There at present, and if I send Him Thither, He is to Lye with Her in a Roome good Enough over the Kitchen: all w^{ch} I like very well, for shee is a good Discreet Woman and says she will Be mighty Carefull of Him: I like as well M^r Mason Himselfe who seemes to Be a very good conscientious Man and Scholar Enough, his Termes are but 12^l. pr Annum w^{ch} is a 4th part Lesse then M^r Blackwells. But somewhere by the Grace of God I do firmly Resolve to put out my Boy Mun, and we Have good Schoolemasters Enough about us, viz. M^r Blackwell at Bicester, M^r Rocheford at Addington, M^r Mason at Water Stratford, and M^r Amand at Thornewton who writes an admirable Hand as I am told, All w^{ch} I Name unto you Desiring yr Opinion w^{ch} of all These you Like Best and I will put Him There.'

Mun junior is eventually sent to join his brother; but Mr. Blackwell is often ill, when 'the gentleman-boarders straggle' at their pleasure, and finally Ralph desires to come home, as they have measles in the school, and small-pox in the house next to them. 'Go, tell my boy Ralph, he should not be afraid, for that's pusillanimity,' but though Dover carried this tonic message, Edmund confesses that he cannot keep his boys 'very long at these schools,' and wishes he had 'the Donation of our Vicarage,' 'to Gratify some Poore sober young Schollar that would very carefully Looke to my sonnes, and Industriously instruct Them in Learning and Vertu.'

Of the public schools he puts Winchester first, but, for its distance from Claydon, Eton next, and Westminster last, because it is in London. Harrow is not mentioned, though Dr. Denton's grandson is there, preparing for Oxford.

Dec. 29,
1679.

'This day dining at my Sister Gardiner's,' writes Sir Ralph, 'I met with Mr. Burrell, & Finding him to bee a discret young Man, about 20 yeares old, I examined him about Eaton Schole (hee being of the Foundation), if you resolve to send your Eldest sonn thether, (if Mr. Burrell bee not sped to Cambridg,) I thinke he is a very fit Man to take care of your sonn there; but my oppinion is to send him into France, (with a soher, discret Governour,) rather then into any schole in England, God direct you for the Best. . . . I have now sent you a Weekes Preparation for the Sacrament tis very short & very good, I bought Three, one for you, another for your Brother, & the Third for my selfe.' Edmund, whose own education had been carried on in France, Italy, and the Low Countries, considered that the acquisition of modern languages, and of a certain polish, were too dearly purchased by giving up the advantages of educating a boy in England.

Ralph at sixteen is to go to Winchester. He is to live in the College; the outfit required is large, and 'Gentlemen Commoners wear very costly gownes'; 'Kersey's Arithmetick' is one of his books. Edmund had settled to take him: 'My Boy Ralph having lost his ague, keepes a great

deale of Begging at me to go on Horseback, pretending that he is alwaies sick in a Coach.' So the father and son ride from Claydon to Winchester with two servants on horseback. Ralph seems to have been there only two terms, when his father wrote as follows to the Headmaster, whose name is unfortunately not given on the copy kept of the letter.

'Sir, I Received yr Civill Letter, for weh I Returne you my Very Hearty Thankes, as also for yr paynes about my Sonne & care of Him: I Didd ffully Intend to send Him Back to you (or M^r Usher which of you I know not) But Hearing you Gave a very Ill Character of Him Here before a great deale of Company at Table openly at London, Since he left Winchester I Didd not Think it Decent in me to Trouble so accomlisht a Gentleman as you are nor y^r Schoole with such a Block Head any more, for I Know ffull well, that Ex quorvis Ligno non fit Mercurius, and am sorry that my Sonne should Be composed of such substance that nothing can shape Him for a Schollar. But it is his ffault and None But His, and the worst wilbe his owne at long Runne, for William of Wickham's ffoundation is I Belcive the Best Nursery of Learning for young Children in the World, and perhaps never was Better provided with abler Teachers then now at this present, yr selfe for a Master, Mr. Home for an Usher and M^r Terry for a Tutor. I Have another Sonne, whom I Ever Designed for Winchester also. I Do not Despayre But That He may Regaine the lost Reputation of his Brother, But untill the ill impression weh my Eldest Hath Left Behind Him in Winton Be utterly erased and Worne out, I am ashamed to send Him Least the impression should prove a disadvantage to Him in yr Schoole. I understand that my worthy ffreind D^r Sherrock Hath payd All my Sonne's scores within and without the Colledge in Winchester. I pray Deliver this Enclosed Letter from my Sonne to M^r Terry his Tutor and you will oblige yr Humble Servant Edmund Verney. . . . Things may (I hope) Be so cleared that his Brother may appeare There with Credit and Honor Hereafter: if I should send Him.' Ralph's note to his tutor does not suggest that he

Sept. 5,
1682

considered himself in disgrace· he writes affably as one gentleman to another, and makes a present to Mr Terry of his green carpet. Mun was probably writing under 'the horrible smart' from a bad leg which tormented him in later years, for he shows as much irritability to little Mun, who had just earned for himself the title of 'as goode a childe as can be' after a visit to his grandfather.

'Childe, I Received a Letter from yr Master M^r Blackwell, who complaines of you in yr Businesse, & That you are Idely & Evilly inclined, and particularly That you jointly with some other, as Badd as yr selfe, Have lately Mischeifed a Tablet or two of his, and That you Rise in the Nights which was made to Rest and Sleepe in . . . you Have much Deceived me, yr ffather, who Blinded with Love to you, Thought you no lesse then a young Saint, But now to my Greife perceive, That you are Growing very fast to Be an old Devill.' He 'designes forthwith to choose a place for him of extreme severity such as he had never felt nor seen'; a threat which fell lightly on this hardened offender, who doted upon his father, and infinitely preferred his wrath and bluster to Mr. Blackwell's favours.

Mun is anxious to get Molly away from so sad a home, much as he will miss her, and at eight years old he takes her with him to London. 'Tomorrow I intend to carry my Girle to Schoole, after I have showd her Bartholomew Fayre & the Tombs & when I have visited her & a little wonted her to the place, I'll come home.' She goes to 'Mrs. Priest's school at Great Chelsey,' in Mrs. John Verney's chariot with her father, aunt, and brother. She learns to dance gracefully and 'to Japan boxes,' but more solid acquirements seem to be wholly left to Mrs. Priest's discretion. To Molly he writes: 'I find you have a desire to learn to Jappan, as you call it, and I approve of it; and so I shall of any thing that is Good & Virtuons, therefore learn in God's nanie all Good Things, & I will willingly be at the Charge so farr as I am able—tho' They come from Japan & from never so farr & Looke of an Indian Hue & Odour, for I admire all accomplishments that will render you considerable & Lovely

in the sight of God & man ; & therefore I hope you performe y^r Part according to y^r word & employ y^r time well, & so I pray God blesse you.' To learn this art 'costs a Guiney entrance & some 40s. more to buy materials to work upon.' Edmund hopes to put her later into the household of a lady of quality, paying her board and giving her a maid, and then to marry her to a country squire of good character and moderate income ; and he can imagine for his little Molly no happier fate.

CHAPTER XLIX.

UNDER THE MERRY MONARCH

1675-1683.

THE reign of Charles II. was pre-eminently an age of hospitality. It was—on the surface at all events—a time of coarse wit and loud laughter, of clever talk, of dancing, duelling, dining, theatre-going, card-playing, and horse-racing, and of amusement raised to the dignity of a fine art.

England was said to suffer more from the King's virtues than from his vices, because his perfect manners made self-indulgence 'appear a part of good breeding, and essential to charm.' Not all the King's lieges stopped short, as he did, of excessive drinking and ruinous gambling. Dr. Osmund Airy, whose intimacy with Charles II. is unquestioned, challenges this statement in the first edition. 'I really cannot allow that incomparable Prince,' he writes, 'to be shorn of any of his accomplishments. I do not think he was very often drunk before the Restoration; but certainly after that he displayed what Mr. Weller called "very considerable powers of suction" with the usual effects.'

April 20,
1676.

This is Dr. Denton's account of 'Beauish Pembroke's' dinner party; he was Lord Licutenant of Wiltshire and a favourite at Whitehall. 'James Herbert lost his cause. Pembroke treated ye Jury, where every one was affraid to sitt next to him, but att last S^r ffr: Vincent did, my Ld began a small health of 2 bottles, w^{ch} S^r ffr refusing to pledge, dashed wth a bottle att his head, & as it is said broke it, they beinge parted S^r ffr was gettinge into a coach & alarm arisinge y^t my Ld was cominge wth his sworde drawne, S^r ffr refused to enter, sayinge he was never afraid of a naked

sword in his life, & come he did, & at a passe my Ld brake his sword, att w^{ch} S^r ffr Cried he scorned to take ye advantage, & then threw away his owne sword & flew att him furiously, beate him, threw him downe in ye kennell, nubbled him & dawb'd him daintily & soe were parted. A footman of my Lds followed mischeivously S^r ffr into a boat & him S^r ffr threw into the Thames, two more were cominge wth like intentions, but some red coats knowinge S^r ffr., drew in his defence & I heare noe more of it.' A little later 'My Ld Pembroke being in a Balcony in the hay-market with other Gentⁿ, some Blades pass^d by and fired at him but mist him & kill^d another.'

A still more outrageous scene is enacted in the room of a lady of quality. 'Two exchange women (to whom Lady ^{Oct. 5, 1676} Mohun owed a bill, and to whom payment was promised with Michaelmas rents, wth wch they seemed satisfied,) after drinking brandy, came with 4 braves to my Lord's lodgings: the women went up, spit in my lady's face &c. the men staid below and cried where is my L^d &c. My Lord at this alarm went upstairs, took his sword & pistol & one of his men the like, and after some passes, shot, miss'd the man but shot thro' his hat; that not doing shot again, but the pistol would not go off: the hubbub increasing they retreated, my lord having rec^d a slight wound on his hand; they were 3 Irish & one lifeguardsman.' The guardsman, when wanted by justice, is screened by his officers, though perfectly well known ('one Sutton of Laxington's family'), and takes occasion to beat Lord Mohun's footman next time he meets him. My Lord himself dies of a wound received in a duel the following year.

Sir Ralph rejoices that a tax of twopence a quart is put on wine to pay the King's debts, 'for if the People have noe Minde to pay this Tax, let them bee drunke with Ale and strong Beere. I beeleeve Brandy will be forbid, or soe greate a Tax Layd on it that none will import it: for since Labouring men have got a Trick of drinking Brandy, tis evident it hath hindred the Brewing of many hundred thousand quarters of Mault in England'

March 11,
1675.

'The Citizens are most noble feasters.' John describes the 'Great Wedding made by y^e Widdow Morisco for her Eldest daughter (who had 10, or 11,000^e portion) married to Aldⁿ Fredericks son & kept at Drapers Hall, the first day there were 600 dishes, & the second & third dayes were alsoe great feasting at ye same charge, And then Sr J^{no} frederick entertained them with 400 dishes, And this day the six Bridemen (for so many there were & six bridemaydes) Entertainne the company. . . . Today is another great Wedding kept at Coopers hall, between Kistings son, & Dashwood (the Brewers daughter) both Anabaptists, I intend to be there in ye evening.'

March 18,
1675.

Child marriages, with consent of parents, are still solemnised; Sir Ralph speaks of 'a young Wedding between Lady Grace Grenville, & S^t George Cartwright's Grandson, which was consummated on Tuesday by the Bishopp of Durham; she is 6 yeares old and hee a little above 8 yeares old, therefore questionlesse they will carry themselves very Gravely & Love dearly.' . . . 'The E. of Litchfield is married to the Dutchess of Cleveland's daughter, who is 11 years old, & the Earl 12.' Sir Ralph is his trustee.

Oct 18,
1670

Sir Ralph hears that 'The Kinge is soe delighted with his jorney to nuemarkett, and with the sport a saw there that a is ressoveld to spend the mounth of March att that place and for his better incouradgm^t divers persons of quality did make afore their breaking upp severall maches to bee runn att that time.' Dr. Denton describes the amusements that had been so congenial to Royalty: 'Neighbour Digby did uppon a wager of 50*l*. undertake to walk (not to run a step) 5 miles on Newmarkett course in an houre, but he lost it by half a minute, but he had y^e honor of good company y^e Kinge & all his nobles to attend & see him doe it stark naked (save for a loin-cloth) & barefoot,' and he adds that 'the Queen, for a joke, in a disguise rid behind one to Newport (I thinke Faire) neare Audley Inne to buy a paire of stockins for her sweethart; y^e Dutchesse of Monmouth, Sr Barnard Gascoigne & others were her comrads. Kate

Tate is married to a man of 3,000/ per Ann: Y^e Queen sent me word y^t she did it to justify y^e Sultan'

Mun writes: 'The King & the jockeys met at supper at Ned Griffin's where were made 6 hare-matches for 500/ a match, to be run at Newmarket next meeting.' On another occasion the King 'has been hawking in Bucks, but walked soe much, he took cold thereon, soe that he fell ill that very night & was unwilling to be blouded, but severall Physicians coming from town persuaded him to it & likewise to take some Manna . . . he is now said to be pretty well again, which God grant'

Nov. 23,
1676.

Aug 23,
1679.

Ursula Stewkeley illustrates the manners of a fast young lady of the period. Cary writes to Sir Ralph, her husband being in London: 'I wish he had stayed at home, Bot yr sex will follow yr Enclynations w^{ch} is not for women's conveniencys. I should bee more contented if his daughter Ursula ware not heare, who after 8 months plesure came homb unsatisfied, declaring Preshaw was never so irksome to her, & now hath bin at all the Salisbury rasis, danceng like wild with Mr. Clarks whom Jack can give you a carictor of, & came home of a Saturday night just before our Winton rasis, at neer 12 a clok when my famyly was a bed, with Mr. Charls Torner (a man I know not, Judg Torner's son, who was tryed for his life last November for killing a man, one of the numbar that stils themselves Tiborn Club), And Mr. Clark's brother, who sat up 2 nights till neer 3 a Clok, & said, shee had never bin in bed sinc shee went a way till 4 in the morning, & dancd some nights till 7 in the Morning. Then shee borrowed a coach & went to our rasis, & wod have got dancars if shee could, then brought homb this crue with her a gaine, & sat up the same time. All this has sophytiently vexed me. her father was 6 days of this time from home, & lay out 3 nights of it, & fryday shee was brought home & brought with her Mr. Torner's linin to be mended & washed heare & sent after him to London, where he went on Saturday, to see how his brother Mun is come of his tryall for killing a man just before the last sircut, And sinc these ware gone I reflecting on thes actions, & shee declaring

May 4,
1671.

she could not be pleased without dancing 12 hours in the 24, & takeing it ill I denied in my husband's absenc to have 7 ranting fellows come to Preshaw & bring musick, was very angry & had ordered wher they should all ly, shée designed mee to ly with Peg G, & I scaring her, & contrydicting her, we had a great quorill'

Mr Stewkeley was detained at Winchester with Captain Norton, 'for a gentleman of the Brs came to us in our Inne and Invited us to a pasty of venison w^{ch} stayd us untill past 3 aclock,' but on his return, 'after a long absence the more welcome,' he devises some private theatricals as a safer outlet for the girls' energies. He writes to Sir Ralph: 'Wee had a Diversion here w^{ch} was very acceptable to the Ladyes wee Invited, and after that a Collation: to morrow Lady Vaughan [Rachel, afterwards Lady Russell], Lady Noel and theire Husbands wth other company will bee here, this is a much cheaper way than to have theire company severally, and more obliging, and there were no fewer than 30 the other day of Gentry; and the like number wee expect to morrow, besides attendants. I did take out of the play what I thought a little immodest & Impertinent, and the Spectators had almost putt-them out wth commending them so loud, as they were acting: Carolin being but 14 did act a prince's part (w^{ch} is a very long one about 300 lines) beyond all their expectations, and Cary and Pen did theire parts very well, and Peg Gardiner and Ury who acted Harris and Batterson's parts in that play came off with great applause and all wth as little prompting as ever I observed at the Theater, and I think it very unusuall to have it performed in our family. Yr sister and I are more delighted then wee would make shew of, for I am sure without Ingenuity and good memoryes they could not do it so well.'

The disorderly state of the London streets is constantly referred to. In the winter of 1670 Dr. Denton relates that 'betweene 7 & 8 aclock, 5 or more horsmen dogd ye Duke of Ormond, who went home by ye way of Pal-mal & soe up James' Street & just as his coach came to ye upper end thereof, on of them clapt a pistoll to his coachman y^t if

cyther he spoke or drove he was a dead man, the rest alighted & comanded him out of y^e coach; he told them y^t if it were his money they should have it, soe they puld him out of y^e coach, foret him on hors back behind one of them, & away they carried him, my L^d havinge recollected himself y^t he had gone about 30 paces as he ghessed (& as he told me himself for I went yesterday morninge to see him) & finding he was hinmost, his foreman havinge his sword & bridle in one hand, & his pistoll in y^e other wrested ye pistoll out of his hand, & threw y^e fellow downe, fell with him & upon him, & gott his sword & gott loose of them not wth out some other hazards, one pistoll beinge shott att him & two more fired. He is bruised in his ey, & a knock over the pate wth a pistoll as he ghessed, & a small cutt in his head, after all w^{ch} he is like I thank God to doe well. This makes all ye towne wonder, if money had beene their designe they might have had it, if his life, they might have had y^t alsoe. Some think & conjecture only, y^t their malice & spite was such y^t they would have carried him to Tiburne, & have hanged him there. They cannot Imagine whom to suspect for it. The horse they left behind. It was a chestnutt, wth a bald face, & a white spott on his side. He y^t was dismounted gott off in y^e dark & crowd.' Dr. Denton reminds Sir Ralph, 'if Ormond do chance to come to you a byled leg of mutton is his beloved dish for dinner.' Sir Ralph Sydenham is known as 'the man that loves barley broth.'

Mr. St. Amand is attacked in his coach between Knightsbridge and Hyde Park Gate, robbed of two guineas, some silver, and his periwig, and so much injured that prayers are desired for him in Covent Garden Church, where his assailants may well have formed part of the congregation.

Tom Danby, who had married Margaret Euro, was killed about this time in a London tavern 'by one Burrage, an affront at least, if not his death,' being planned beforehand. Mun Temple in a similar brawl was knocked on the head with a bottle, and died of his injuries. Sir Ralph had to use all his interest to save Will Stewkeley from the consequences of a drunken quarrel in which a man was

Aug 30,
1675.

murdered, though not by his hand, and he had to retire to Paris for a time. Duels are of daily occurrence. John's letters to Mun are full of them. Mr Scrope, sitting by Sir Thos. Armstrong at the Duke's playhouse, struck him over the shins twice; both men wished to speak to 'Mrs. Uphill, a player, who came into the house masked. The gentlemen round made a ring, and they fought, Sir Thomas killed Scrope at the first pass; not the first man he had killed, said the bystanders.' The sudden quarrels between intimate friends that end fatally are most startling. Sir William Kingsmill's cousin, Mr. Hazelwood, 'came of a visit to see him, they fell out, & it ended in y^e death of Mr. Hazelwood, nobody was by but only them two, tis to be hoped y^t his sister being at Court may help to save his life.'

Nov. 1683.

Oct 21,
1683.

Nancy Nicholas relates how three young men who were friends—'M^r Teret (ye son of a ship captin), M^r Foster (S^r Hum: Foster's brother), & M^r Coney, maid an agreement y^t w^{ch} ever of y^m first married, shuld pay to ye other two 200^l a pece; now Teret was latly married & those 2 others came for their monney, w^{ch} he would have railed y^m out of, but at last it came to blos, ye seconds was M^r O'Brian & M^r Dean, Teret & Foster both dead upon ye place, y^e other 4 wounded.'

Lord Cavendish and Mr. Howard disagree about some proceedings in the House; Lord Cavendish sends a challenge which Mr. Howard, being sick of the gout, cannot take up at once, and my lord posts him at Whitehall Gate for a coward and a rascal; it needed the combined efforts of King, Lords, and Commons to put an end to this absurd quarrel. Young Lord Gerard, aged fourteen, takes his mother to see New Bedlam; the drunken porter and his wife are insolent to him, whereupon the lad draws his sword and 'runs the porter into the groin'; the rabble fall upon Lord Gerard and nearly pull him to pieces, thrust him into prison, and then break the windows to come at him again. The Lord Mayor rescues him and shelters him in his house all night. Meanwhile the Countess of Bath driving past 'has her coach broke to bits & her footman knocked down, being taken for

Lord Gerard's Mother.' The plucky boy rouses one's sympathy, but there are worse stories than these.

John Verney writes of Cornet Wroth, who dined with Sir Robert Viner at his country-house, 'and after dinner going an airing with him, drew a pistol on his host, and having six or eight troopers to assist him, carried off Miss Hyde in a coach, a wheel broke and he laid her across a horse, and rode off to Putney ferry where he had a coach and six; the country was roused and the girl was recovered speechless, but the gallant Cornet escaped.' Some of the doings are tragic, some merely foolish. John tells Mun how 'a Quarrell happened at Islington Wells, and swords were drawn, but noe blood, & indeed the falling out between 2 friends was soe silly, that it lookt like an agreement between 'em beforehand. I was present at the sport, which happened in a room where were at least 30 Ladyes very much frightend & most of 'em underfoote, soe that there was fine squeeking and squeeling for a minute or two.' Edmund relates 'a pleasant Passage that Happened t'other day in Barkshire: viz my Ld. Ch. Just: Scroggs Being upon the Roade in his Coach, two Gentlemen on Horseback overtooke Him, and perceiving Him a sleepe, One of Them sayd to the Other I will Rowse Him with a Trick: and so Having Such a Baston in his hand as I use to Ride with, smote the Toppe of his Coach with it mighty Violently, & Cryed out with a Loud Voyce A Wake Man severall Times, and so Galloped away with speed.'

There were problems enough to occupy the minds of thoughtful men; the price of food was rising, and the poor were sinking into deeper poverty. Sir Matthew Hale, amongst others, was occupied with a scheme for giving work to the unemployed, when he died on Christmas Day, 1676. Edmund writes: 'That incomparably Learned & ^{Jan 4,} upright Man & Just, Judge Hales it seems is dead to us, ^{1677.} & gone without question unto a better Place, though He will be more missed then any man in England except His Majesty, for he hath not left his fellow behind him. Therefore I cannot choose, but condole a Losse so con-

siderable & universall to my Country, for the Newcastle Duke & Lady Duras & Latimer's still-born soune, They are nothing to you or I, or any Body Else besides a few private friends of their owne. My Cosen Greenfield of Wotton I heare is Dying also & that signifies as little, & so the death of Cuff Emerson is as inconsiderable, he was father to young Mistiess Hide's husband & lately died of the small-pox.'

Jan 3,
1677.

'Heere are 2 or 3 stories,' Sir Ralph writes, 'about Judge Hales foretelling the time of his Death; in the maine, I beleeve them true, but the circumstances are told variously, & are too long for a letter, . . .' 'I am persuaded,' Mun replies, 'that such an excellent vertuous Man as Honest Judge Hales might have the spirit of Prophecie given him, to prophecie anything according to the Analogie of faith.'

Aug. 30,
1677.

In the summer of 1677 Mun was seriously ill in London; as soon as he could he moved he went with Sir Ralph and John to the Stewkeleys. 'Preshaw Ho. puts me in mind of the loaves & fishes,' writes Dr. Denton, 'it increases & Multiplies with the company.' Lady Smith had arrived with two daughters, a chaplain, two maids, three in livery, and six horses; 'if rightly informed there was but one guest-chamber & how to provide room for 65 is next to Miraculous. I doubt not of the mirth & entertainment, but I am sure I could not be contentedly merry in any crowd.' Lady Gardiner is so happy in the good company of her brother and his sons, 'which made up a most pleasant harmony,' that when they leave her, she writes: 'Our neighbours lament our soden chang, for all heare looks like the novesis when thay put of ther gorgeous cloths, and put on ther nun's habits.' Sir Roger wrote one of his affectionate letters, inviting Sir Ralph and his sons 'once more to come together & visit poore Wroxall, where I think to spend a good part of the next summer if we are not by some cross providence prevented; he was staying with Daughter Guyon at Yeldham on his way to Sutton for the winter. He is very unhappy at the conduct of public

Aug. 20,
1677.

affairs, which has left 'the enemie at liberty to come & cut our throats at our very doors.'

Shortly after came a letter to Sir Ralph from Dr. Henry Paman of St. John's, Cambridge. 'Sir, you had rec^d from me the sad newes of dear Sir Roger Burgoyne's death . . . but I was not very willing to speake of my owne sorrow for soe great a losse. If anything could have given him courage enough to live, it was the seeing of Dr. Denton, who came by chance, but hee thought him sent immediately from Heaven & was extremcly pleased to see him. He did very often in his sickness entertain me with discourse of you, & how excellent a friend he had in all occasions found you.' Dr. Denton had called in on his way from Ely, and found his old friend in 'a world of danger,' 'he is very earnest with me not to leave him, I told him I durst not for feare you would never forgive me if I did.' He writes to Sir Ralph again, that Sir Roger died on the 16th, having taken to his bed ten days before: 'his first care was that you might know it & noe man so much in his thoughts as you, with the kindest expressions & acknowledgments imaginable.' The good old man had long described himself as 'a Tattered Vessel'; his eldest son had made a happy marriage with Constance Lucy of Charlecote, his affairs were in order, and in these last days he spoke of himself as 'Well, very well, only weak.' 'If I should doubt his happiness,' the Doctor wrote, 'I know not whose I should be confident of.' The old Doctor himself had been wildly imprudent. His health had not been 'current of late.' 'I gott noe good att Sturbridge Faire by oysters, fresh herrings, varietics of wine & beare, the same befell Sir Roger as they say, as likewise to his father also before him.'

Through all the convulsions of the State Sir Roger had kept the even tenor of his way, sympathising with popular progress, and for himself, content to do the duty next at hand with all his might. 'I envye not the highest cedars, but am content to be a shrubbe, valueing much more safety than the greatest honour, for cottages may stand when pallases fall.' Sir Ralph spoke of him as 'the joy and

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Sept. 18,
1677.

comfort of his friends and Family, and certainly the best husband, the best father, and the best friende in the world' Sir John Burgoyne begs Sir Ralph to accept of cloth for a mourning suit, and to order it of Mr. Lovell at the Cock in Bedford Street Sir Ralph is not pleased: 'this seemes a little Odd to me, that I must send for it, certainly the custome is to send it to one's owne house, or Lodging, I am sure I never knew it otherwise, nor shall I send for it, nor take any notice of it in my answeere to his letter.'

The last office of friendship which Sir Ralph can perform for Sir Roger is to design the monument which the widow wishes to put up over the family pew in Sutton Church He gives the matter his most careful attention, and entrusts the work to Grinling Gibbons, whose signature and seal are appended to the specification. Sir Peter Lely, Kt., and Hugh May, Esquire, are to decide, when the monument is complete, whether 100*l.* or 120*l.* should be paid for it, but the payment is not in any case to exceed the latter sum, 'the overvalue being for the credit of the said Greenlin Gibbons at his own offer'—which sounds more like the deed of a generous artist than of a man of business.

In a letter of Sir Ralph's to John there is a touching reference to the anniversary of the battle of Edgehill 'You know that to morrow senite is the 23. October, & how I keepe that day, therefore were you now heere, I canot begin my Journey till that day is over.'

A new figure appears in the letters this autumn, William of Orange arrives in England, and has been with the King at Newmarket; and with the Royalties 'incog. to the revels at Lincoln's Inn.' Dr. Denton writes 'Ye match wth Lady Mary & ye Prince was Concluded last Sunday night; on Munday ye Councill, I.^d Maior, &c went to congratulate her, & y^e night of Bells & Bonfires good store. . . . Dr Lloyd of St. Martins goes wth Lady Mary for some few months to settle her chappell. A Greeke church hath beene long a building in St. Giles feilds, it goes on slowly.'

Lady Hobart writes: 'All the news hear is of the Lady Mary's mach; tis gret joy to all the sety & everybody. She

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and Duck, Duchus and Lady Ann set and cry 2 or 3 houres together, thay ar loth to part' The bells and bonfires were for the betrothal, the marriage itself took place on the 5th of November, the tears shed would have been bitter indeed, could any of the family party have foreseen that the bridegroom would invade his father-in-law's kingdom, on the anniversary of this joyful wedding day. Guy Fawkes' day was kept by the Verneys as 'gunpowder Jack's' birthday

'We all remember ye date on the 5th inst.' Nancy ^{Nov 7,} writes to him, 'our Prince of Oring behaved himself like a ¹⁶⁷⁷ generall as well under his canopy of peace, as he doeth under y^t of war & is an active dancer on ye ropes, & his prety lady seemeth prety well plesed. Y^e formality of Maridg was performed by y^e Bp. of London, Sunday night 9 a klok.' The Prince would not tolerate the customs usual on such occasions, '& the Duke desired ye company all to withdraw.' Nancy considers that 'the Prince performed ye part of an able man for the honor of the dutchmen,' but he was not popular in town. Society pronounced him to be 'the plainest man ever seen & of no fashion at all'

The old jealousy of a standing army is warmly expressed, yet when troops are wanted for the war with France in 1678, Edmund writes: 'The Drums beat up last Saturday at ^{March 18,} Alesbury for Volontiers, but not a man came in to list, altho' ^{1678.} they might have been under [Capt.] Wisedome's conduct, whereby it playnely appears, the spirit of the nation is down, or elce we are not the Men we fancy ourselves to be, for I have heard Many say if we had war with the French that vast Multitudes would go against them, but for my part I see no such thing, if people in other parts of Eng^l are as backwards as in our Country & Wallingford where I myself frighted most of the young fry into Holes & Cellars, with only walking up & down the streets, being taken for a Presse-Master. If there is a shower of blood at Orleans, it is a sign of Much Effusion of Blood in France, those prodigies sent from Heaven never come in vaine.'

'I think Collonel Legg Hath made a good Choyce in

Craddock the Butcher for a Captaine in his Regiment. I know the Man and Have sene Him fight Prizes, He is a stout Man and a Neat Gamester · when I am a Collonell I will also Choose my Master Druse a Gladiator of Alisbury, who Hath ffought with Cradock and Worsted Him, for one of my Captains.' He laments that 'the overflowing scum of our nation is listed' and that 'the better sort of Men will not come in voluntarily unless they like their officers very well. In Northamptonshire men come in pretty thick to be enrolled under Lords Brian & Peterborough. Capt. Wisdome can get none at Ailesbury but "Gaolbirds, thieves & rogues."'

Mun has no doubt that he could raise 'both Horse & Foot for his majestie's service as good men number for number as any he hath'; he is willing to serve 'provided he has his own terms not otherwise.' When the troops are paid off the following year there is still more discontent 'The troopers of Buckingham were disbanded by Sir John Busby, Sir Harry Andrws, my old Cozen Stafford & Captain Lovett. My L^d Latimer was also there & the Troopers were extremely angry with him & swore they would never serve under him again, nor fight for King Charles & a many of them sayd they would robb, for home they durst not goe. The King & Dukes Guards 15 in number that passed & repassed here the other day carryed the money to pay them off. Theyr fire armes are sent up to London by one Webb a caryer.' The men are selling their 'very good buff belts for 18^d a peece.' 'I never remember this country so infested with rogues as it is now, last Thursday 3 or 4 of them stood with theire swords drawne in my Ridge way wch leads to Buck^m, they were on foot yet very fine in apparell & had Cloakes . . . they meant to robb H. Scott's house but the market-folkes passing theire hearts failed them. . . . I Heare Sr John Busby Doth ffancy Himselfe a great Commander, Having Gott two smale ffeild peices of about 3 inches Bore, wch were Sr Anthony Cope's, and are to be discharged often against Stow & Claydon: These are Thundering Peeces of Mortality wch Do no wayes affright,

Jan. 20,
1679.

nor can possibly Daunt Yr most affectionate Kinesman & Servant, Edmund Vane.

He makes some curious references to the Guards: 'I wonder much How any One can Think, because I sayd ^{July 16, 1677} I would Have a sute à la soldate, that consequently I must Be in the Kings Livery, wch He prescribes his Guardes to weare, for my part if I were of Them, I should Hardly weare it upon Duty, unlesse particularly commanded by his Majesty, and Then I must obey especially if I Take his Pay. for though I carry a souldiers Mind yet I Hate any servile Badge, Neither Do I understand the Livery wch He makes his peculiar Guardes weare, to Be the only Patterne Becomming all other Souldiers to ffolow in their Habits, for thats as Every One fancies, so That There is no necessity for the Generality of Martiall Men to fall into such Extremes as to Be in the Kings Guardes peculiar Livery, if they will weare a Habit souldier like: and as There are Garbs particularly adapted unto a Souldiers Genius so likewise There are sundry sorts of Habits becomming Souldiers in particular & sic de simili: But for ffear my Taylour should want skill How to distinguish the severall Differences, I will Direct Him to make me a Hansom sute fitt for Winter & to Apppeare in any Christian seraglio. I intend to have two Liverys like yrs, though I shall Travell but wth one, for when I am Returned Home I Resolve to Bind Nedd Smith Apprentice, Then I'll Keepe But Two Livery Servants, w^{ch} to Keepe in different Liverys were somewhat preposterous.'

The allusion to the Scots Guards is still less respectful: 'The D: of Y: Hath Been Very unhappy to Himself & to ^{Jan. 29, 1680.} These Nations: I wonder He should Desire the Scotch to Build a Church, for if I Mistake Them not, They are more like to Pull Downe Churches then Build any: & I wonder as much that He should desire a Scotch Guard for his Person: Hath He fforgot How that People sold his most Excellent ffather: and if He doth Remember that Peece of Judasisme, can He imagine They will Be Truer to Him, if He do, He Hath a Better ffaith in Them than I.'

July 16,
1677.

Sir Ralph tells Mun that he thought no gentleman would ever wear 'the habit of the Officers of the Guarde, but now I heare a Baronet of Suffolk did last week wear it in Whitehall, which made soe greate a Laughter in the Court & at this End of the Towne that I beleeeve 'twill never bee done againe by any Man in this age. . . . You shall give me your picture in a Buff Coate, or in armour with all my heart, but not in a sute, like the Officers of the Guard.' Mun writes: 'I do not understand How the Granadiers can Doe any considerable Execution with flying Hand Granadoes on Horseback, w^{ch} makes me wonder that his Majesty can Have so great a ffancy for that sort of souldiery.' 'I am sorry for the Poore Men that were drowned in y^e ffrench Man of War that lately Perisht, But I wish all this french Kings Ships at the Bottom of the Sea and Lost for ever.' English feeling had changed much since the enthusiastic welcome given to Madame: the country squires were sickened with the subserviency of the Court to Louis XIV. When Sir Ralph heard that the French army was saved 'from a total rout by the Imperialists,' by the valour of the English and Scotch in their service, he could only lament that 'they lost not theire lives in a cause more pleasing to the generality of theire owne Nation.'

July 30,
1679.

Nancy Nicholas tells a queer story as current about town: 'Our King sent people over to Calais,' and the King's corncutter went with them 'because he could speak French, and they bore his charges and gave him 2 guineas for his reward. So y^e French K satt at Dinner in a great room & y^e L^d Sunderland dynded att y^e table wth y^e K, & ye L^d duras & all English gentillmen satt at a nother table in y^e same room, wth great men of France y^t ware to be to enterten y^e beter sort of English; & y^e ordinery English men ware caried to y^e side table to drinke & all in y^e same roome wth y^e French K: a French man began ye K: of France's helth so ye Corn cutter he swore he would drinke his health for it was his own master's, for he was K: of En^d Fr: & Scot & Ierland, & he spoke it so loud y^t y^e K: heard, & asked who it was, & he had his bags on him & they said it was a buffon

of England, so yⁿ he took a glas of win & said he would begin a health & that, he said, was to ye King *in France*.'

Bucks shared with the rest of the Kingdom the excitement caused by Titus Oates' pretended discoveries, and an engraved stone at Oatlands that 'Oats shall save this land from destruction' was quoted by Edmund as containing a political prophecy rather than a simple agricultural fact. Sir Richard Temple disbelieved in Oates from the first, and was called a Jesuit for his pains. Edmund writes from East Claydon to John in London: 'I perceive by yours of the 20th That abundance of Rogues and Jades are condemned, and are like to suffer according to theyr Demerits: But for ye great Rogues, Jades and Traytors, we^h Deserve Death Ten Thousand Times sooner then y^e Other, They are like to escape & be Pardouned, we^h is a most sadd Thing to Consider upon. Lord Have Mercy upon Us for I wonder How all This will End, I am affrayd very ill.' 'Yesterday Oates Preacht in forster lane,' John wiites, 'where were Greate Crowds of people, more to see then heare him, for some tell me his performance was not Extraordinary.' On November 5 in this year, besides his brother's health, Edmund drinks many loyal toasts to the confusion of Conspirators and Plotters. The Sessions in London were heavier than had been known for forty years, '20 men & 13 women being condemned to death'

Oct 23,
1679.

Oct 27,
1679.

Nancy writes: 'We had mancy bonfiers heare a boughts & at Tempel bar was burnt ye Lord Shafstbery & Dr Oats, & very unhappily I know not by what means it hapned but y^e mobele was very rud to y^e Dutch Imbasidor & his wife we^h he did not expect shuld be shewed him on y^e 5: of Nov.' 'The Pop and S^r Edmond Godfery,' Cary writes, 'was carryed in greatare triumph then evar, from Whithall to Somarset hous on Qu. Elizabeth's coronation day, though wee all hard the King sent to my lord Maior to repres it, we^h replyed hee could not hope to due it, the people being fixed to due it, wod bee daingarous to sopres it; parsons of quollity went to see it as thay did my lord Maiors show, bot the pop was burnt at temple bar, and S^r Edmund Godfery

Nov. 20,
1679.

only carryed to Somarset hous, they say ther was 20,000 attended this show all day and expected to bee soprest by the gards and declared they wod stand on ther defence but all was quiat. John writes that there were 100,000 spectators, and that the King wituessed the pageant from a goldsmith's window; that the devil appeared attended by boys in surplices, with a train of bishops, cardinals, and friars, with bell, book, and candle &c. 'On Queen Eliz^a birth night S^r Robert Peyton's Effigy will be burnt with the Pope's By the Rabble, On fryday y^e King walked to Hampton Court, & Portsmouth rode in her Coach by him.'

'It would Anger One strangely to consider unto what a ffayre Market of Destruction Wee are Brought, meerely through the Negligence, folly, unskillfullnesse & Basenesse of our Pilots, who neither would nor Could save the shipp from sinking and Perishing, notwithstanding They were admonished and Directed How to Do it in Time By the Voyce of the People.'

This very modern sentiment was Edmund Verney's comment on the results of the reign that began with such enthusiasm of popular approval. Yet in that age of paradoxes Charles II.'s personal popularity was never greater than during the last few years of his life. The reaction after the frenzied cruelties with which the Popish plot had been avenged, rendered vain Shaftesbury's desperate game to secure the throne for Monmouth; and strong Protestants, like the Verneys, wholly disapproved of the Exclusion Bill, while deploring the Duke of York's conversion to Rome. The King, who stood bravely by his brother in all his unpopularity, sent him abroad till the storm abated.

Edmund writes to Sir Ralph in the spring of '79: 'That y^r Distemper Should Leave you, & the Duke of York, England, much about the same Time, is a Mercy, w^{ch} makes mee Merrily & Trebly Sing, Gaudiamus and Haleluia, and I pray that the One be never suffered to Trouble you more, nor the other this Nation again, and so God Blesses our good King Charles, in whom I Hope There is no Guile.' But the Prince returns sooner than Sir Ralph's distemper: Cary

writes from London, 'In stead of the Duck's going for Oct 18,
Scotland, hee with the doches and daughters Arrived heare 1679.
last night, Dalavall denton who came with him told mee
when they left flanders all ther discour was for Scotland,
bot whilst the Duck was coursing on the sees, being tosed
with severall winds about, they met with letters from the
King to give leve to come this way, And you may esely ges
England is more plesent then Scotland, the doches exprees
exterordynary joy, she saith she hath not had a happy hour
since she went out of England. But to come to the sad
story of the tims, the Duck of Monmouth came to towne on
thursday about one a clok in the morning, and that night had
great bonfiars for joy, great numbers stoped coaches to get
mony, and hackneys, and maid them fling up ther hats and
say God bles Jaims duck of Moumouth, elc thay wod afront
them.' John tells how he was stopped in the streets, and
when he refused to give the crowd money to drink
Monmouth's health 'they cried out a Papist, a Papist. The Dec 1,
L^d Mayor & Aldermen went to congratulate his Maj^{ties} re- 1679
covery, the D. of York was by but they took no notice of
him, wch he resented; Tis said the K. took my L^d Mayor by
the hand & welcomed him, at wch my L^d M. took him by
the other hand & shaking both s^d I thank you, I thank you,
several times more.' Cary writes 'this great joy is not at
Whit hall bot as much angar, for the King will not see him
[Monmouth] but in his angar has taken a way all his plases:
isterday tis said hee had 200 visitants a great number of the
nobilyty. my lord Shusbury and lord hollofax I hard
named: tis beleved the great kindness the people shows him
maks the king hate him: and tis beleved thay that crys him
up dus it only in opposition to the Duck.'

'I sent my Girls to court last night to heare news,' Cary
writes again, 'wher ther was the greatest court on that
acount as has bin seen sinc the plot begon, for usually ther
is very fue as I am told, but iching years carryed many to
heare the Duck of Monmouth's dome, w^{ch} most lamented,
and some said the duck of monmouth wept when he heard
the joy the people exprest, knowing it wod ruing him, the

say in court the King sent to him to bee gone on tuesday, bot the duck refuses to goe, on what account is severall wayes said. bot the girls tells mee the King looks so very ill as it greved them to see him, and came twice in, bot spok to none bot my lord Fevarsome who came in with him, thay nevar saw man have more discontent and disorder in the looks then the King had, the Queen was brisk and looks well, the new master of the hors came in playing before the King.

The panic of the Popish plot had made Catherine for a time unpopular. John Stewkeley wrote in June, when there was even a cry of sending her to the Tower. 'The Queen is the subject now of great consultation, whether for Portugal, or a closer place, or the continued favour of him that fears no colours nor is sensible of any Danger; but the Qu. shows herself in the Park & is very merry.'

Dec. 7,
1679.

'Tis a very Crasy Time everywhere,' Mun writes, 'Especially at London. The Duke of Monmouths Comming Back with such generall acclamation and joy & flocking of the People to see & congratulate Him, will Rouse up His Royall Highnesse to Hasten his Ruine, wth without a Rebellion can not be prevented in all Likelyhood: for His Majesly Hath determined y^e succession in the Duke of York, with much Reason in my thoughts: I am concerned to see Things Run so violently: But God's will must Be Done.' Amongst Monmouth's personal friends in Bucks was Sir William Smith, to whom he gave his picture; and with whose unstable character and ostentatious ways he had much in common. John writes that 'y^e D. of Monmouth was at St Martin's Church, when he came in all People shew'd him much Civility by rising up, and some Cry'd God blesse y^e Duke of Monmouth, I heard say that he then & there Receaved the holy sacrament.'

Dec. 7,
1679.

'My lord Gorg the duck of Monmoth's son being sick the King give him leve to goe see him, and sine his death the duck has leve to be wth the doches at the Cockpit, so many hops hee will come in favour againe, because you shall heare the nues of the towne as well as mee, true or false, tis said

the duck of monmoth sent to the dochis of porchmouth to know why shee was his enymy so much, who answered him sheewasso, and wod bee so as long as hee was an Enymy to the King and her, and that hee should find she should bee upheld by all the princes of chrisendome: a brave hiektoring lady; tis said the parlament will set up the duck of Monmoth and will find witnesses to prove his Mother was maryed to the king, to show you the probabillyty of this tis said the Bisshop of Winchester is to bee one of the witnesses, this the Molytude wod have, so will talk of it though thay ruing him thay love by it. The Dochis of porchmouth calls the parlament The 500 Clowns; Nelly dus the Duck of Monmoth all the Kindness shee can, bot her interest is nothing.' 'Nell Gwin begg'd hard of his Maj^{tie} to see him, telling him he was grown pale, wan, lean & long-visaged merely because he was in disfavour; but the King bid her be quiet for he w^l not see him.'

In the midst of the excitement about the Exclusion Bill, Oct 20,
1680. Nancy Nicholas writes: 'This day our Great Duke Yorke, & his Dutches is gone for Scotland; last saturday ye Lord Fairfax, Cousin Sherard's father in law, was walking in St^h Jeames Park & his hignes did se him & so came to him & took him by ye hand & said to him, Woll my L^d I se you are all com up to doe what you can against me; I am ye more sory for y^e occasion, replied yt L^d, but we are all resolved to assert y^e properties of our nation & ye Prodistant Religion; & His Royal Higness replyd again, I will give you all y^e asshurance you can ask y^t I will not disturb y^r propertie; this I ame shuer is a real truth . . . tis said to-night y^t tis the Dutchis of Porchmouth y^t hath sent his hyness on this errant.' Cary hears that 'the Duck has a very full and gloryus court in Scotland, the Duck of Monmouth is at the cokpit, bot his dochis is ill, and has reson to bee so for her estat is all drowned by waters in Scotland bot 5000^l a yeare, and all her fortuns sunk heare at present w^{ch} maks mee pity her extremly.'

Nancy must have a story to tell Sir Ralph: 'This day in ye house of L^{ds} saith ye L^d Clarindon (by a wac of

whisper) to L^d Shafstbery—"my L^d we can never be well so long as y^t ill woman ye D. of Porch^h is wth our K; so I hope you will give y^t helping hand to remove her;" "my L^d, my L^d," couth Shafstbery "we are now hunting Tygers & Bairs & Birds of Prey & now you would a Cony-Ketching." Edmund writes from London on December 30, of a noble quarry hunted to death by Shaftesbury, 'my Lord Stafford was beheaded yesterday & died like a Roman.'

Sir Ralph had been winding up his guardianship of the two charming Lee heiresses, Lady Rochester's granddaughters, who were nearly of age, Anne Mrs. Tom Wharton, and Eleanor Lady Norreys, afterwards Countess of Abingdon.

In the matter of Anne's marriage to Mr. Wharton Sir Ralph had taken a decided line against Charles II.; the young lady herself was said to prefer Mr. Arundel, who (as Cary Gardiner writes to her brother) 'has the favour of the King and the othar looked on of no good reputation, so tis said tis done in oposition to the King, who looks on my lady rochister as an ungratfull woman he having given her a good part of what this lady Injoys w^{ch} was forfeited by treson, and his severall favours to my lord rochister, who they report cursis her and the young lady and all that has maid this match, beleveing it will slaken the King's kindness to him. besides tis said Mr. Arendall has bin unhansomly delt with. A hondred things more is said, bot all I say I wish you had not bin thought the chefe contrivar of it, w^{ch} we all indeavour to make be thought otharwayes, for though you are not a cortiare I wod not have you be thought an Apossar of the Court . . . tis said the King rit to Mistross Lee with his one hand.'

The Lees had been treated like daughters by Sir Ralph, as their husbands gratefully recognised. There is a discussion whether they shall present their guardian with 500*l*. in plate or their portraits by Lely; Sir Ralph chooses the latter, and the pictures are at Claydon. Tom Wharton was not the man Sir Ralph might be expected to favour except in the Whig interest. 'My lord whorton's son as maryed my lady rochistars grandchild showed himselfe a gallant of

Sept. 8,
1673.

the times at Salisbury races, wher hee was more extravagant then most of the company and so more noted.' Cary can only hope that he will be 'more grave neer homb.'

No two figures in the society of the Restoration could be more typical of the old influences and the new than Sir Ralph Verney and his ward Lord Rochester.

Anne, widow of Henry Wilmot, 1st Earl of Rochester, had been accustomed to depend upon Sir Ralph for advice ever since her first marriage with Sir Francis Henry Lee of Ditchley. When her second husband died (in 1659) she claimed his services as guardian to her boy of eleven, and for her sake he had filled a difficult and thankless post. The names read strangely in conjunction, the grave Sir Ralph with his austere morality and fastidious tastes, and the handsome young peer, courtier and poet, with his wild genius, defying all authority human and divine, 'for five years together continually drunk,' leading the mad revels at Court, or practising physic as a mountebank on Tower Hill, with equal 'exactness & dexterity.' Sir Ralph had been summoned in haste by the Dowager on the occasion of 'my sonne Rochester's suden marage with Mis Mallet Feb 15, 1666. contrary too all her frinds' expectation. The King I thank god is very well satisfied with it, & they had his consent when they did it—but now we are in some care how too get the estate, they are come too desire too parties with frinds, but I want a knowing frind in business, such a won as S^r Raph Varney—Mas: Coole the lawer & Cary I have heare, but I want one more of quality too help mee.'

Old John Cary still transacts their business; he writes, when Sir Ralph is invited to Rycote, 'I pray do not thinke of trouble to my Lord Norreys, for he will be very glad of your company & bidd you very wellcom, & so will his good Lady: You catch me with a why-not still: Indeed my memory growes bad, very bad, & things go out as fast as they come into my head now, I am walkeing (as well as others) apace towards the land of forgetfullness & cannot help it, it must be—Happy are those who are fit for that day.'

Fourteen years of a wild life had followed his marriage, but Lord Rochester's reckless self-indulgence had been unable to quench his lovable qualities, and those about him accepted his repentance with eagerness when 'he came to himself'

In 1680 he is very ill, and is advised to drink ass's milk. Sir Ralph is, of course, to find the ass. Mr. Cary writes: 'I much feare my Lord Rochester hath not long to live, he is here at his lodg & his Mother my lady dowager & his lady are with him, And doctor Short of London & doctor Radcliffe of Oxon. Himselfe is now very weake, God Almighty restore him if it be his will, for he is growne to be the most altered person, the most devout & pious person as I generally ever knew, & certainly would make a most worthly brave man, if it would please God to spare his life, but I feare the worst, at present he is very weake & ill. But what gives us much comfort is we hope he will be happy in another world, if it please God to take him hence, And further what is much comfort to my Lady Dowager & us all in the midst of this sorrow is, his Lady is returned to her first love the protestant religion, And on Sunday last received the Sacrament with her lord, & hath bin at prayer with us, so as if it might please God to spare & restore him, It would altogether make upp very great joy to my lady his mother & us all that love him.'

June 7,
1680.

'He is like to dye,' Sir Ralph writes; 'his mother watched with him last night; he hath been a most penitent and pious man in this sicknessse.'

June 15,
1680.

A week later Mr. Cary reports that 'My lord we hope is on the mending hand, but many changes he meets withall, pretty good dayes succeed ill nights, which help to keep upp his spirits, but he is very weake, and expresses himselfe very good, I hope God will spare him for his owne service for the future.'

July 18,
1680.

'My lord Rochester continues very weake, he is sometimes a little lively & gives good hope of his recovery, but anon downe againe, which makes us much to feare the worst.' A week later he is dead; his young widow and

'my little Lord,' the last of his line, follow him to the grave before three years are out, and Sir Ralph lives to see his very name granted to another.

In contrast to Rochester's life, even amongst men of fashion, we hear of Christopher¹ Battiscombe, an accomplished young man, who afterwards suffered in Monmouth's rebellion: 'his body made so very handsome and creditable a tenement for his mind, it had been pity it should have lived in any other. All that knew or saw him must own, Mr Battiscombe was very much a gentleman. Not that thin sort of animal that flutters from tavern to playhouse and back again, all his life made of wig & cravat, without one drain of thought in his composition—but one who had solid worth.'

Monmouth himself was in Bucks in the summer of 1681. Sir Ralph and Edmund were in his company at 'the races on Quinton Meade' which lasted three days; 'Sir R. Temple and Mr. Wharton were there, and many persons of quality.'

Shaftesbury's success in getting up petitions to the King to allow Parliament to meet, drew forth a host of counter petitions, expressing abhorrence of the design to force the King's will. The address of the Town of Wycombe² 'presented by Dr. Lluellyn to his Maj^{ty} at Windsor upon Bartholomew day 1681,' is a type of the abject loyalty and the flowery language of the Bucks Corporations. They speak of 'the late defeated Politicians,' as 'disappointed of their dark designments by y^e Majestic's profound wisdom & divine provision,' and protest that 'wee have alwayes detested & rejected them, together with their now exploded scanty & forsaken abettors. We have ever incerted o' loyall selves amongst the resolute, grave, & deliberate p'sons. And wee doe most highly applaud the stout fidelios, the

¹ Woolrych's *Life of Judge Jeffries*. He has had a namesake in the family ever since; and Christopher Verney Salmon, b 1901, son of Major Salmon (whose mother was a Battiscombe) and Ellen Verney of Chaydon, carries on the tradition.

² *History of Wycombe*, by J. Parker.

strenuous, brisk & valiant youth of this your now much undeluded nation We therefore, Yo' Mat^{ies} most dutyfull & most devoted subjects entirely p'fesse That we will to the utmost stresse of o' sinews, to the latest gaspe of our lives, & the last solitary mite in o' coffers adhere to your Ma^{ties}. . . Many have out stript us in the wing but none shall exceed us in theire wishes; we envye much their more easley apply, but none shall ever appeare more faithfull

God preserve yo^r Ma^{ties} from all rebellious Machinacious Amen.'

April 16,
1688. The King repaid this adulation by an attack on the municipal charters, which placed the representation of the boroughs in his hands The names of the Petitioners and Abhorers were soon changed into those party titles which have lasted to the present day. Two years later Muu writes 'Tho : Smith went with Cosen Denton to Holson Race: where There Happened a Contest Betweene Wigg and Tory, the Later would not contribute to the Plate in case the Duke of Monmouth Didd Runne for it, and the Wiggess offered to Make up the summe for it, in case the Toreys would not.'

Nov. 20,
1688. When Shaftesbury is tried, Dr. Denton writes: 'Our friend S^r W. Smith is of this grand jury, where you know his pregnancy of parts will justly entitle him to be *Domnus fuc totum*.'

March 29,
1688. While the long dispute is raging about the succession, the two childless women, Catherine of Braganza and Mary of Modena, have their small rivalries. 'I heare ye Qucen & Dutchess are not Cater-Cosins,' John writes, 'ye latter having at Newmarket given ye Country Ladyes leave to come to her in mantos, her Court was every night full, & ye Qu : sate alone. So when ye Fire happed, ye Dutchess & Lady Anne went to ye Queen's doore to attend her, but she sent them out word she would be private. Then they went to L^d Suffolks whither the Qu' &c being alsoe to goe, said she should fill ye house her selfe, soe ye Dutchess &c removed to Rochester's.'

This spring Eleanor Lee, now Countess of Abingdon, is

entertaining the Duke of York with his Duchess and Lady Anne at Ilycote, where 'there are 9 choice Cookes to Dresse the Meate.' Mun hears that 'The City of Oxon presented his Highnesse the Duke of Yorke with a payre of Gloves. and the Earle of Abingdon writt to Cosen Denton to come & augment the Splendour of the Cavaleade that accompanied the Duke into Oxford Towne: but Hee went not. The Mayor of Oxon my cosen Towneshend [Mary Denton's husband] Didd not Go & wayte upon the Duke at his Lodging in Christ Church Colledge, because my Lord Abingdon could not secure Him that the Mace Should Be suffered to Be Held upp when He Entered into Christ Church colledge, wch it seemes the Bishop would not allow: so he went not to wayte on Him, my Cosen A. Denton went to Ricot to Excuse his not wayting upon my Lord when the Duke made his Entry into Oxford: and Thom. Smith went along with him. Major Stafford's Eldest Sonne is Dead. and so is Alderman Buckwell, So That old and young Go to their Earthly Mansion, when Almighty God pleaseth so to Decree it.'

May 21,
1683

May 28,
1683

The Rye House Plot again disturbed the peace of the kingdom and cost two precious lives. Close to the lodgings where Betty Adams stays when she is in town, a scaffold is being erected 'right against the Marquis of Winchester's House, where the wrestlings are used to be in Lincoln's Inn fields,' upon which Lord Russell must suffer on the morrow. And so closely do tragedy and comedy jostle each other in this unhappy time, that while Algernon Sidney is being tried for his life, some mad court ladies, 'The Lady Mary Ferrard, & others, had a frolic to putt on men's apurell, & walke the streets attended with some Gentlemen. In Leicester fields they mett wth a fidler, & I know n^t on what provocations, but ye poore man was killed amongst them, tis said they are in ye Gate house.'

July 20
1683

Nov. 26,
1683.

John writes a few days later: 'Here is no newes but that Coll Sidney is to morrow to dye & tis said ye Whiggs have talkt him out of his life by talking the plot to be at an end & no more should dye for it.' He writes again when

Dec. 6,
1683

the fatal deed is done 'On Friday Coll Sidney was beheaded on Tower Hill, he dyed a great hero, shewing all the Indifferency Immaginable, he made no Speech, but delivered a paper to Sheriff Daniell (which he hath given to his Majesty, but tis said twill not be printed), He made a very short prayer to himselfe, & was beheaded at one stroke, before the horse Guards came, who were all with ye foote Guards, ordered to encompass the scuffold, & I think the foote Guards were but just on the hill' 'He met death with an unconcernedness that became one who had set up Marcus Brutus for his pattern.'

CHAPTER L.

SAINT NICHOLAS' CLERKS.

1655 1685.

It is said that the romance of the road was buried with Claude Du Val in 1670, when, having been 'banged a convenient time,' he was conveyed to his grave by persons of quality, with a fashionable train of the weeping fair, and laid under a white marble stone curiously engraved with the Du Val arms, in the middle aisle of St Paul's Church, Covent Garden.

The Verney letters offer little enough of romance in the life of a gentleman turned highwayman; and he was likely to spend more of his days in dunning his friends from a stifling cell in Newgate, than in galloping over breezy commons, or lying in wait for dowagers' coaches in tortuous lanes. There were doubtless brave spirits, who, in a simpler age, might have 'stopped the mouths of lions,' or, in our own, would have found vent for their energies in African deserts, or in Arctic snows; but like Dick Hals, weary of risking their lives in being defeated by the Dutch, and sick of waiting for arrears of pay, they threw themselves into reckless and desperate courses, making war against a society which had refused to receive them as allies.

Even the sensible and prosaic John Verney felt his blood stirred by tales of their valour and resource. 'A couple of highwaymen,' he writes in 1679, 'having robbed a countryman & leaving him his horse, he pursued 'em with hue & cry which overtook them, but they being very stout fought their way through Islington & all the road along to this town's end, where after both their swords were broke

in their hands & they unhorsed, they were seized & carried to Newgate. *It's great pity such men should be hanged.*'

The Verneys were not behind other persons of quality in owning relatives among these gentlemen of the road; and the correct and austere Sir Ralph did his best to get his highwaymen cousins out of scrapes. He gave them money, lent his wig, even, on occasion, to assist in a disguise and an escape; and used all his political and social influence to procure reprieves and pardons. Lady Hobart, living among the Judges, in the high places of law and order, threw her sympathies into the same scale, helping with all her might to baffle justice, and to promote adventure.

Whatever might be public opinion about the highwayman's career, his sentence never failed to evoke a burst of compassion. A rowdy gathering of good fellows accompanied him to the foot of the gallows, and laughed at the devil-may-care courage with which he met his doom; kind women, like Frances Hobart, shed hot tears of wrath and pity over his execution, while they prayed Heaven to have mercy upon his soul.

On less tragic occasions, those who had not themselves been robbed or frightened treated the adventures of their friends as a good joke; and a man like Colonel Henry Verney, when charged, half in jest, with an attack made on his old uncle's coach, was in no hurry to clear himself of an accusation conveying a distinct compliment to his pluck and horsemanship. Men applauded just as heartily when a traveller of unwonted courage stoutly defeated the gentleman who meant to rob him; in short, the risks of the road gave rise to a number of capital stories which had this spice about them, that the man who in his armchair laughed at the highwayman's audacity and the traveller's alarms, did so with the strong probability of having to experience both, the next time that his occasions called him abroad.

'Richard Dawson, whose family intermarried with the descendants of Mary Verney and Robert Lloyd, is remem-

bered for the courage with which he and his servant Christopher Fogwen successfully fought the highwaymen that infested Kennington Common and the neighbourhood. Mr. Dawson and Kit were famous characters in their day. They would sometimes drive out disguised as old ladies, in bonnets and veils, and, when attacked, would rush out at opposite doors, take their assailants in the rear, handcuff them, put them into the coach, and drive off in triumph with their captives.' ¹ Mr. Dawson was worth robbing, being as wealthy as he was capable and determined. He was at the head of the Vauxhall glass-works, established under the patronage of the Duke of Buckingham in 1670.

In 1657 Dr. Denton's coach was stopped on the highway by 'St. Nicolas Clarks . . . who rob'd him and his Lady.' The whole family cracked their jokes upon the Doctor; Lady Hobart hears that 'he has recruited his self of Hary and others at play, let him take heed he be not met with again.' Sir Roger Burgoyne tells them that if they will but undertake a journey to Wroxall, he will secure them from such kinds of vermin, and return them laden with thanks into the bargain. 'When you see the doctor let him know, I goo nowhar but I met with his news,' writes Lady Hobart, 'and never any man was so lafed at, for ever body macks mearth at it: tis said he knows the theifs, and my ant Varney vows Hary Varney one, and mayd por Pen mad; let him know what a repitason he has with hur.' Good Nat is sarcastic. 'You doe well to make yourself merrie with the storie which goes of my cosain Hary Verney; it seemes he is pleased with it too, but I am persuaded he would have liked the money better then the jest.'

Frank Drake is coming to pay Sir Ralph a visit. 'We shall take it as a favour if you please to account us so farr strangers uppon the Way, as to send a Guide about nine a'clock to the George in Alsbury, to direct us the best way for the coach by my cosen Winwood's gronds, or any other cleane way to Claydon, and my wife particularly intreats

¹ From the family MSS. of the Rev. C. F. S. Warren, by his kind permission.

you if my cosen Harry Verney be at home that you will shutt him up, for fear he meet with us as the Dr. was mett with, for whose Lightnes I am very sorry' 'Harry is heere,' Sir Ralph replies, 'and I will shutt him upp for once, but for future Clapps, looke to yourselves for hee is a dangerous fellow, and wherever hee thinks any money may be had, you know a protection will not be within my power'

Each neighbourhood had its own legends of highway robberies; Bucks abounded in them, and Fuller has preserved for us a proverb of the county, 'Here if you beat a bush, it's odds you'd start a Thief.' An adventure in Buckinghamshire lanes befell Sir George Wheeler. He was courting a beautiful young heiress, Hester Harman, who eventually refused him, and accepted Alexander Denton. When Sir George recalled in later years how he had been saved from the thieves who sought for him, he never omitted to thank Heaven that he had failed to gain the wife whom he had sought.

This was, however, a later development; at the time of his ride through Bucks,¹ 'in the summer of '72 or '73,' he carried about his person a jewel of great price to be given to the fair Hester; as well as a gold watch, 20 golden guineas and some silver; he had providently bargained that if he himself were to be rejected the jewel might be returned; in either event it was important that he should not be relieved of it by the way.

Sir George Wheeler had spent some days with his tutor at Lincoln College, Oxford; and was sensible, he says, 'of the risque I were Like to Run in my Return to London.

'To conceal the Time of my Return I knew was scarce possible among so much acquaintance; all that I could was to conceal the way I designed to Returne which I did, for I went downe the town as to goe by Beconsfield Road but as soon as I was out of East Gate turned Nor'wards, and went to Sr. Ralfe Varney his house in Buckinghamshire, where I was kindly entertained all night. Sir Ralfe Varney was a

¹ The *Genealogist*, vol. iii. pp. 45, 46.

worthy and ingenious Gentleman, I came to be acquainted with him at my Uncle Deutons, where I frequently met him.

'The next day Sir Raffe obliged me to stay and dine with him, and Staying after Diner too long, night overtook me before I could reach Alsbury. Within a mile or two of this town I came into a deep and narrow Lane, covered over with the trees in the hedges, so close that I could see neither way before me, nor skie above me, nor anything about me. Having Pistols before me, I drew one and held it in my hand, So that I could Span it in a moment for ffeear of a surprise I was not, I suppose, above half way down this Lane but on a suddain two or three men call'd out Stand ! Stand !! Stand !!! ffeearing them to be Robbers I Blustered also &c, til we came to a Parly, and I demanding what they would have, they told me they were the watch sent to Stop all Passengers, ffor that there had been Robberies committed that Day upon Uxbridge Common ; That every body had been Robbed that past that way from nine or ten in the morning til one or two in the afternoon, which was the time I should have bene there from Beconsfield had I gone that Road. So I desired these men to conduct me to the towne and shew me the best Inne, and I would Reward them.'

John writes: 'Last night about 6 miles from London ^{April 18,} the Dutch mail was robb'd by 2 men, who gott a purchase ^{1086.} of 10,000*l.* in gold and Jewells, the letters are allmost all lost. There was one Passenger rode with the Post Boy, and a Trooper was so kind as to accompany them, but not to defend them. Sir Robt. Knightly and his son in the day time last weeke was robb'd just by his country house, by 3 highway men, who commanded them out of his Coach ; and tooke neither Rings nor Swords but money, they were very well mounted. One of his servants, a woman, lookt on all the while and thought they had been of Sir Robert's friends. They call'd him by his name, his and his son's loss was about 5*l.*'

When we turn from highwaymen in general to the special worthies belonging to the Verney family, we find two cousins, Hals and Turville, who earned the crowning

Aug 23,
1658.

distinction of the gallows, they were both connected with that strong woman 'ould Lady Verney,' mother of the Standard-bearer. Richard Hals was Sir John Leeke's grandson, and nephew to Anne Hobart and Dorothy Leeke¹. Robin Turville had served with Sir Edmund Verney the younger, and Fred Turville claimed cousinship at Claydon; Sir Ralph writes for him to his trustee, 'John Ashburnham to the care of Capt. John Walterhouse, governor of Garnea Castle,' about some money Turville wants to spend 'to put him into a capacity to live. I heare hee hath been represented unto you under a very ill carracter, & soe hee was to me, which made mee the more narrowly observe him, & truly I must needes doe him soe much right as to assure you, that since I knew him, I could never justly Tax him with any manner of crime or vice, and yet hee hath spent some part of his Time in my owne house, and my Cozen Natt Hobart's, & with other of my neare friends, where hee hath gayued much Love and affection, & had hee misbehaved himselfe, I must have heard it'. Turville did not justify this good opinion, just after the Restoration, Sir Ralph is concerned to hear 'how matters went with Fred Turville at his triall, for really I should be very much troubled if hee should suffer, but his own groundlesse confidence made him too carelesse, & may cost him deare.'

July 23,
1660.

He escapes on that occasion, but a few years later we learn his fate amongst other sensational items of family news sent by Edmund from East Claydon to John at Aleppo; 'Cosen Jack Temple, Sir R's Brother, was tryed for having fourteen wives at once, and escaped the gallows. I think I have sufficiently spoken of marriages. Now for hanging, which also goes by destiny according to the opinion of some. My cosen, Fredd Turville was hanged at Hertford for burglary, and other crimes. But I'll speak no more of such ignominious ends, though these ensuing may be as deplorable; for my cosen Thom: Danby was basely murdered in a tavern in London by one Burrage; Cosen Reade killed in

¹ See vol. i. p. 118.

France ; Cosen A. Temple, lieutenant in a ship of war was slayne before Algiers,' etc., etc.

Fraunces Hobart, who had a special place in her heart for the black sheep of the family, refers to the catastrophe in a very different tone, in writing to Sir Ralph Venney . ' I received a letter from my poor coussin Frederick Turville the day before he was executed, where he made a request to me to send you this inclosed which he did earnestly desire might be conveyed safe to your hands. I know you have had soe much kindness for him that I fear his death has given you some trouble, for though he was guilty of many crimes in his Life, yet he died as we are informed a very good christion, with a most undanted corage shewd nothing of censure at all, but told all thouse persons that where with him at the place, which where divers gentlemen of great quality, that he did not feare to die, but the manner of his death troubled him ; he aded that he would not trouble them with a formal speech only desired there prayers, and after he hade read some prayers which he hade in wrighting he weept, and made noe confession there, he told them he hade don that to God, he died a chatholick, he had a priest with him a weeke, who wrought a great reformation in him. Noe gentleman was ever more lamented both by his friends and strangers, only by thouse barbarous uncles that did make it apeere by there jingling proceedings that they designed his death all along, which I beleve will light hevie upon them ; and Walker with his servants declar it was their will he should die , and for his sister it ware to tedious to tell how unnaturall she had bin . He expressed some trouble that in all the time of his affliction she never once came or sent to him ; it is too late to wish, but certainly had you bin in town I doe verily beleve he had never come to this, but there was an ill fate hung over him, for there was many designs for an escape, but he neglected them. . . . They did not take any care at all for his buriale, but that woman that was continually with him till his death did bury him in the church yard. I know not what she is, but never any woman had a greater kindness for any man than she, and

Aug. 25,
1666

has spent all she has, and sold all to her skin for him. Sir I have dwelt too long upon this unpleasing subject which I biceech you pardon.'

Aug. 15,
1666.

Lady Hobart adds her testimony to his merits. 'Sir Wilam Glaskock was with him to confes, but he wold not, he sayd he had lived ill but he wold not dy lick a knaf nor ruen a family, but he sayd he shold see he cold dy as unconserned as he was then, his unkell Will at last wold have sayed him, but he pretended he cold not, but wold have had his sister gon to have beged his lif but she wold not, she sayd let him be hang, I sent him an slugell but I hear he had not a cofen nor a frind to bery him, the contry cry out of his onkells, he did expres kindnes to you and to us and my Aut Vearny.'

Of Dick Hals we know much more, as he lived on terms of intimacy with his Claydon cousins, especially with Edmund Verney, who was about his own age. His father, Captain William Hals,¹ made his will in 1637. Having returned but two years before from a West Indian voyage of great danger and suffering he was 'bound forth' once more on his perilous way. He took with him a good part of his personal estate 'as an adventure, in hope to improve the same, having divours debts due to him in the Ilands of the West Indies.' He bequeathed his 'plowland of Ballymore' and his lease of 'the two plowlands of Juthimbathy,' both in the county of Cork, 'and the stock of some reasonable value thereon,' to his 'deare and well-beloved wife Bridget, and that young and tender child whom it hath pleased God but lately to bestow upon me.' When we next hear of them, the sea-captain has died 'in his shipp.' The 'well-beloved' Bridget has married again, and the boy is in England for education, where Doll Leeke, his guardian, lavishes upon him what little cash she receives as Lady Gawdy's gentlewoman, and all a maiden aunt's wealth of devotion. He ingeniously defeats her efforts to make him work in any profession, but in his nineteenth year she writes triumphantly to

Nov. 1655. Sir Ralph, 'My nefew has put on his gowne. I thought it

¹ See vol. 1. p. 121.

had bin only discours and not a reall intension.' He replies, 'Tis true your Nephew hath at last put on his gowne, but I belevee 'twill come off againe much easier, or I am much mistaken in the Humour of the man.' Dec 3,
1655.

Sir Ralph's forebodings were justified. Doll writes to him six months later: 'My sister Hobart sends me word you will lay out ten pounds for Dick if he can get a plas, I give you humble thanks for it, I shall not fail to pay it . . . the pore boy has been willing to save his Mother's credett, tho' he has left himselfe in the lurch, and to the Charity of his frinds hear, He lost his time extremely while he was with his mother, and spent his twenty pound a year. The Master that I sent him to, gave a very good Carractur of him, and sence you are plesed to take notis of him, I pray obledg me so much, if you know of any lawer or atorney that wants such a servant, that you will asist him in the procuring of it. Beallie he was a very good conditioned youth, and can write 2 or 3 good hands.' July 2,
1656.

'I find by my sister you have layed out some monies for Dick, I shall not fail to see it payed, as sone as I receive it. I am sorry we should give you such a trouble, but it is the fate of nedly peopel to opres ther frinds . . . it troubles me very much that Dick can get no preferment, I cannot endure to think he should goe back to his mother (in Ireland), whear he has lost so much time allredy, I had rather he wear a souldier, which is the worst of all professions. I have filled the paper therefore should think of a conclusion, but I fancy myself with you all this time and that is so great a plesur that I forget it is but a fancy.' July 30,
1656

In the spring of '68 Aunt Doll comes once more to the rescue. 'You see the condision of pore Dick Hals,' she writes to Sir Ralph, 'if I heelp him not his life may be lost upon that account, which wold give me a very great troble.' The shiftless boy who was idling about the Law Courts in 1656 had taken a long step in his downward career by the time this letter was written to Mun Verney: Feb. 3,
1668.

'Sir, Since it was my unhappinesse to returne into England soo much contrary to your advise, I was un-

fortunately betrayed to the Master Keeper of Newgate and sold for 100*l* by a treacherous friend in February last, where I have ever since remained in Irons I cannot expresse with what joy I should kisse your Hand should you vouchsafe to visit mee, which if you should please to thinke mee worthy soe greate a happinesse, you might not bee seene to come to the prison, but to the Fountayne Taverne by St. Sepulchre's Church, and send one of the drawers to the Keepers, and they will bring mee to you. Sir heerein you would make mee infinite happy. I knowe not howe it may goe with mee, but my Life is in much danger but till I see you I shall be silent. . . . You may send for mee by the name of Captain Changer, for by that name I am known in prison. I lye on the Master's Side in Newgate'

May 25,
1666.

In 1666, Richard Hals has found an outlet for his energies more worthy of his father's son, he thanks Mun for innumerable kindnesses, and tells him that he is 'once more in a fayre way, eyther to intreate or force fortune to bee my frinde, I mcane I am gott on board the Revenge I have waighted both on the Duke and Prince. The Duke hath promised me that the next councill of warr shalbe for my good I hope hee wil be his words' master. Our Flage men doe really beleve that the Dutch will ingage in the beginninge of June. Pray God send itt prove true. . . . We shall have but 80 sayle this summer to fight the Dutch, the rest are designed for the western station to keepe the French Privaters in awe. . . . We shall sett sayle for the Downes within six dayes.'

June 15,
1666

He gives Edmund an account of their engagement with the Dutch, which had lasted from a Friday to a Monday night. 'It was oure fortune att first to be out of the fight, our ship beinge one of Prince Rupert's squadron and bound to the Westward; on Sunday afternoone we came in and did the best we could to se the ende of itt. The Dutch had notice of our fleetes dividing, by two dogger boats they kept on the outside of the Goodwin Sands, our fleet then riding in the Downes, there could be noe hiding our intentions from them. The Duke was not above 46 sayle

when wee began, the Dutch were 90 besides 16 fresh shippes that on Sunday came out of Flushing. When we joyned with the Duke he had lost some shippes, the Prince Royall, the Swiftsure, the Essex, the Bull, the Ouverture [?], the Eagle, the Loyall George; besides many others that were soe farre disabled in their masts and rigginge, that they were forced to leave the fight soe that when the Prince joyned with the Duke, wee could not make above fiftie sayle, most of them not fitt to ingage . . . yett did wee continue to doe our duties to the uttermost of our abillities.' 'The Dutch for ought I could see were as willinge to leave fightinge as ourselves which was enough. The gasett will informe you what commands we have lost, whereof I must needs lament one, Sir Xopher Mynns, hee dies so much like a man, that he lyes more the subject of envy then pity. Lord Admirall Harman lyes too as much honoured as the other died.'

Mun had written 'Worthy,' but the adjective hardly seemed suitable; he corrected it to - 'Dear Cousin, I have July 23,
1666. received divers letters which answer my request to you concerning maritime Accounts for which I thank you . . . Our huge losse both of men and shippes of such worth, grieves me exceedingly, . . . and I hope there will no more such vast jeofayles¹ bee perpetrated where by whole Nations may be put into great jeopardy, and that our wooden Bulwarks and Forts (than which we have no other) may no more be basely and cowardly yeilded up to our Enemies, but that some course will be taken to preserve our ancient Policie, which was (if I am not mistaken) that all Commanders and souldiers whatsoever of or in any of the King's ships were to perish in and with them, rather than to let them come into Enemies hands; all which was worthily performed by Our fore-Fathers.' 'But if thy Destiny and (I hope) good luck throw Thee againe into the sea, then I wish thee most particularly (though unto all my brave countrymen) happy successe and victory.'

Dick Hals sends Edmund his journal written on board

¹ From *jeu faillu*, as jeopardy is *jeu parti*, originally terms at cards.

the 'Loyall Colchester,' from July 19 to August 14, 1666. 'I have adventured to send your worship a breife account of my last viage and ingagemēt, in the most seamanlike tearmes my small travell in that art would furnish me with'—it is chiefly a log of wind and weather.

He has reached London, and acknowledges Edmund's letter of Nov 21, 'in which you generously condole the losses of our navy by sea, I hope we shall regaine our lost flags and honours next springe. . . I am tryeing to gett an imploy. Pray God send me good lucke. I have lardge promisses but noe sure ground as yett I want friends to stirr a little for me. I have greater reason now to expect itt then before, since I have sealed my alleagance with some part of my bloud, though noething of danger.'

Dec. 17,
1666

Edmund replies: 'I wish I were able to helpe you to an employment according to your good deserts, but in fayth I am but a poore Country Gentleman without any interest at all in reference to those matters, but . . . if you please to come and keep Christmas with me here you shall be very very welcome'

Dec 22,
1666.

'I find the maine stopp of both my biussnesses,' Dick Hals wites to Sir Ralph, 'to be want of money to the clarkes att the Navy Office, and to my Lord Generall's Secretary. I have tryed all meanes and wayes to gett in my owne wages which amounts to neare 16*l*., but I find I cannot doe itt till after Christmase.' He asks the loan of 3*l*. till his pay comes in, which Sir Ralph sends him. 'Remember I was borne,' he says, 'a trouble to my friends.' Without pay or employment poor Dick could not long keep out of mischief on shore, and there is an urgent note from Lady Hobart to Sir Ralph, 'As you love me let me have one of your whitist wigs and you shall have a new one for it. It 'tis to help away a frind. You shall know all hereafter. Fail not to send it, and let it be that that is lest curled.'

Feb 1667.

Richard Hals is choosing some armour for his cousin in London; he has tested it 'with as much powder as will cover the bullet in the palme of your hand'; Mun wants to test it again, which the armourer objects to, as 'it is not the

custome of workmen to try their armor after it is faced and filled. . . . As for tasles noe horseman in England weares them and as for a quilted gorgett,' but here a mouse has dinced, and the postscript alone remains. 'I have seene all the best armors in the gards, but can see none such as yours are, my Lord Gerard's excepted.' Lord Gerard commanded the eighty gentlemen of the King's Life Guards; Charles had knighted the Commissioners sent by the City to greet him on arrival, with Lord Gerard's sword. Edmund's armour sent down by Plaistow, the carrier, was valued at 14*l.* 2*s.* 8*d.*, the box and cord at 2*s.* 6*d.*

'The Armour fits well enough, only the man did cut away to much just under the Arme pit both of back and breast; but for the head-piece, it is something heavy, yet I think it well enough if it did not come downe so low upon my forehead, as to cover all my eyes and offend my Nose, when I put my head backwards to look upwards.'

Dick congratulates Edmund on the birth of his eldest son, 'God make him a better man than his father, that's blessing enough.'

In 1669 'divers Highwaymen are taken, and had not Dick Hals leaped out of a window 2 storeys high leaving his horse and his cloathes behind he had been taken. War-rants are out for him and many more, the King will pardon none but such as come in and discover and convict their fellows.'

In '70 'Cousin Dick says he is married to a sailor's wife at Wapping' In '71 he writes to Sir Ralph and Edmund from Exeter gaol: 'I, the most unfortunate amongst men, am now forced to act a strange part in this western stage of our English world, imprisoned for noe offence. . . . Whether I live or die, is not much matter, itt not beinge the part of a man to testifie too much fearefulnessse of that which of necessitie will come one time or other, besides I doe not beleve itt ever lay in my power to prevent the stroke of my destenie. I have written to my cossen, your brave sonn, for a whindinge sheete, that in itt I may with my

boddy winde in the eternall remembrance of his aboundinge spiritt.'

Feb 19,
1671.

'Your pardon I beg,' he writes to Edmund, 'as beinge the person to whom I am most obliedged of mankind, nor may you justly deny itt, iff you consider you give itt not now to the liveinge but to the dyeinge admirer of your person. Thet over-rulling hand of fate mc't me in the bud, when I least thought of harme, and in a place where I never did any, soe that lyeinge in gayle onely for want of bayle for the peace, I am like to be made knowne for what in truth I have bene. . . . I am att present in St Thomas' ward Exon, and, Sir, would bee much att peace could I see three lines under your hand. My Aunt Hobart will send itt to mee. My thoughts are unsettled, and sometimes unwilling to leave this world, but when I think of my misserable life past, I againe recover, and possest with thoughtes becomminge a soldier I passe by all concerns.'

Dick Hals might abuse himself but he allowed no one else to do so. He writes indignantly 'to Mrs. Hannah Baker, in Chancery Lane at Sir Nathaniel Hobart's,' 'Because I am att present sunck by thio hand of the most powerful God, you amoungest the rest make me your scorne.'

April 30,
1672.

Next comes a melancholy letter to Edmund from Newgate: 'I have made a hard shift to hould out three or fower yearres in a bad kinde of life, I meane, the highway, for which I am att last condemned to die, justly as to the law, though by the unjustnesse of a false frende, who fainte-harted, swore against fower of us, to save his owne life. But, Sir, his Majestie, out of his infinite mercy, hath bene pleased to save our forfeited lives by his royall repreëve. My Aunt Hobart was the maine instrument, under God, who proved herselfe a mother and an aunt both in this affayre. That verry day I was taken in my bed by 4 in the morninge. They then robbed mee of every pennysworth of my ill-gotten goodes, and enclosed mee in a dungion, where I was kept without candle, fire, pen, inke or paper or frende, till they brought me before the Judges. Neyther could they

then have done me any hurt, had not Judge Morton, by his insinuatinge facultie, over perswaded one William Word to confesse, and to appeach Andrew Palmer, John Britton, James Slaughter and myselfe, which he impudently did, and, by his evidence alone, was we convicted. I have not wherewithall to subsist but what I have from the charitie of my frendes, for truly, Sir, they left me not worth one farthinge, when I was taken. God deliver me out of these handes and send me on board some shipp in the flecte, fire-shipp or other.' Mun agrees, it would be better '*de hazarder sa vie plus honorablement, que de la perdre sur un gibbet pour meschancetez.*'

A few days later Hals appeals to Sir Ralph. 'The Kinge goes out of towne to see the French Flecte, as we heard this verry day, soe that we shalbe left in danger of Judge Morton's ifuyl, which is implackable, especially to me, for goeing by his name, as hee is informed. Now if I could possibly make the Recorder my frende, he is able to ballance Judge Morton, and overway him on the Bench, which is not to bee done but by his clark, Mr. Rumsey. It appeares that my Aunt Hobart did promise him a gratuitie, for the non-performance of which, hee did, in plaine termes, threaten my life in the gayle by insencing his uncle, the Recorder against mee, and itt's verry probable may doe me some greate injury, if not prevented in tyme by sattisfaction. The other three that were condemned with mee gave him 5*l*. each man, and soe would I but that I cannot as yett gett in money which I have in hands abroad. They tell us heere in Newgate that we may be endited uppon other Inditements next Sessiones, which, if soe, our lives will againe lye on the Recorder's good report to the Kinge. I beseech you, honoured Sir, aske advice on this poynte and let Mr. Fall resolve me, and out of your aboundant charitie be pleased to assiste the most unfortunate of your honner's captivated kinsmen.'

He writes again: 'The Kinge crost us out of the generall pardon and to what intent I know not; some say to goe to Tangere, but I beleve to be hanged, which I am sure stands

May 2,
1672

May 16,
1672.

July 11,
1672.

Sept 14,
1672.

with most reason. They intend to endight us againe as I heare, which if they do I am resolved to pleade guilty to all, and if there comes a thousand pardons still keepe me to the Kinge's mercy, except you send me other advice.' Two months later he thanks Edmund for his great kindness, and wishes him 'a merry buck season.' 'Were I in any other gaole then Newgate, I would venter a tryall of skill to see you, but this place is made past all hope.' . . . 'Tomorrow beinge Wednesday, I and the rest of my fraternitie are to pleade a pardon of transportation, some say for the Tangeir Gallies, and others, more moderate, tell us for Virginia.'

It would have been worse than death for a naval officer, who had served with distinction in action, to be sent to the galleys; but Hals was not without old shipmates who remembered his better days. 'Capt. Thomas Elliot my former Capt. att sea, attended the Duke of Yorke in this Citty, in order to his Knighthood for his service done in this and the former warr; and hearinge by a friende of mine, that I have neade of his assistance, gave me a vissitt the second day of his arrivall; hath promised to begg on his knees for my releasement; will to my advantage declare my service under his command in the last Dutch warr, will engage for my future Deportment (which is much) and carry me with him to sea in this present expedition to the streights. See God seemes att last to bee passified.'

Probably Captain Elliott's intercession was unavailing, as Dick refers next spring to his recent 'happy escape out of prison,' and laments his ingratitude 'to see deare a frende as Mr. Palmer,' which he can 'never sufficiently repent of.' For Doll's sake he is being nobly entertained at Croweshall, 'and indeed above the merrits of any kinsman though more happy and fortunate than myself.' . . . 'And on my yet inviolate faith I protest, I would hast to the place I am ordered to'; he sends his 'harty acknowledgments to Sir Chas. Gawdy & that incomparable lady his Mother, that if I die in this expedition my Goast may not be troubled to cross the seas to do it. . . . I am not sent away naked, but with Sword, Clothes, and Money, and to Eternize the obligation, all wth

so free & generus a soule, that I some tines beleve y^r I can bee nothings lesse then a sonn to the one, or a brother to the other.'

Sir Ralph has again given efficient help, 'for nothing can miscarry, where so much generositie leads the van.' 'And,' ^{Feb 10, 1673} Dick writes to Mun, 'I am to goe on pilgrimage to the next Campagne in Holland there to pay those vowes I never made, to serve the French Kinge against the Dutch; but since nothing else but a bad cause can Expiate crime like mine, I submitt to my desteney and resolve to fight for pistolls, and leave conscience att home, my religion beinge yett to chuse. I hope you will not feare my beinge Converted by the Jesuits, but be I, or be I not, I will rather turne Infidell then ever subscribe to any other bible then Your most obldged & most Affect. Coss: & humble Serv^t Rich: Hals.'

He assures his devoted Aunt Hobart that he hopes, in the Low Countries, 'to acquire honour or a grave or both.' Having failed to get either, he finds himself next in Chelmsford gaol, ready to reveal anything or betray anybody. 'Shame kept me from writing before,' he confesses to Sir ^{Feb 8, 1674} Ralph, 'but now beinge absolutely resolved to hate for ever the company and name of a thiefe, the Clergy of Essex, who have bene dayly laboringe with me to cleare my conscience before I die, have prevayled with mee to make this discovery.' The 'Clergy of Essex' were scarcely to be congratulated on their penitent who had stooped to this last baseness 'to win his salvation.'

'My Cossen Frances received a note from me,' he writes ^{Feb 8, 1674} to Sir Ralph, 'wherein was a full discovery of all persones I did or doe knowe that use the pad, but my keeper haveinge bene att London finds thinges, I judge, worse than he thought . . . my discovery was made the 21st. of the last mounth, to Sir Edward Smyth att Woodford, and to Mr. Justice Maineard, who committed me, with Matt Roberts, Toby Burke alias Faulkner, Thomas Dwite alias White, and Harris, which Harris and Burke or Faulkner are taken and in the Gatehouse. Sir Edward Smyth may easely sattisfie

himselfe by seeinge Harris, for he tooke him by the bridle first. The King's proclamation acquits the first discoverer, and soe will the judge, iff Captain Richardson doe not prevayle to the contrary. I humbly beseech you to use your interest with Judge Twisden to this effect. Serjant Bramston, Sir Mundivile Bramston and Sir John Bramston are powerfull men with my Lord Twisden.'

June 22,
1674.

Dick's confessions were not yet full enough. The wretched man gave abjectly all the information asked for. 'When I came into this gaole,' he writes from Chelmsford, 'I was resoulved to die unknowne to my frendes, but Providence orderinge itt otherwayes, to my greate advantage, for althowe I am to be banished, itt is but what I should have courted iff left to my owne dispose, being assured that England, Ireland or Scotland are not places for me to rayse my fortune in, soe that to be sent, as I am promised, by that noble gentleman, Esquire Cheeke, into Flanders, Holland, France or Spaine, is the compleate sume of my desires or ambition.' But his fate is yet uncertain; he despaurs again. 'The tyme drawers neare. I am yett a lost man, sure, sure, sure.' . . . 'That I am a deade man is most corteayne. I knowe itt from too good a hand to doubt itt. I had itt from Esquire Cheeke, who loves me more than I deserve, and promised yet once more to try the Judge.'

July 7,
1674.

July 26,
1674.

The path of the informer is thorny. Dick feels that he has sold himself to the devil, without getting his wages. 'All the miseries which attend humanity have fallen on my head. . . . This onely must afflycte me, that I was soe weake, on promise of life, to discover others, and yett by the severitie of my new masters, the Judges, to be tyed up for my good service. Besides this, all the gentlemen and Justices of the Peace in this county of Essex have bene made staulkinge horses. The noble Sarjant and his ffamily to come severall tymes to take my examination, and to retorne itt to London, and then Judge Whindam himselfe to promise life on the tearmes aforesaid, yett all these poyntes in controversy to be throwne aside and nothinge but death thought on—this is Justice when the Devill shalbe Judge!

Could they not as well have pressed me or hanged in my state of innocency, I meane, while I was a pure theife, without blott or blemish, as to make me sticke in the nostrills of my ould associates, and then out of love to hange me for my new service to my new masters.'

He makes one more despairing appeal to Sir Ralph from Chelmsford Gaol. 'I am ashamed to discover my weakness unto you, but I must. The sight of the executioner, who is still kept in the house in expectation of my execution on Monday next, is the greatest torment to me in the world, worse then death itselfe.'

But Dick was to have another chance. 'I have, I thanke God and good frendes, got the weather gage of ill fortune. . . . That most worthy and generous gentleman, Capt. Collins, into whose hands I putt my selfe after my escape out of gayle, will give an account for his fidelitie eyther here or hereafter.' Sir Ralph has sent him a welcome gift of twenty shillings by his laundress

But in the spring of '75 he is back in Chelmsford gaol, and in mortal fear of the associates he had betrayed who have come from France to witness against him. 'Iff thinges had not bene soe privately carried,' he writes to Sir Ralph, 'I should not now have troubled all my noble kinsmen and frendes. How they will deale by me this Assisses, I know not nor can I learne of anyboddy what is done for me . . . onely a she frende, wife to Carew writ me downe word (ould love will not be forgotten) that her husband, and Stanley and Palmer and the rest have layed their heades together to cutt me off, the way they intende to goe to worke she could not informe me, but soe soone as she knowes she will. Least I doe not live to write more unto you pray Sir . . . present my respects and service to my generous cossen Verney . . . and with my soule I wish I had taken his counsell when time was. . . . Iff I am not hanged, I shall goe, like Mounseir Le Quo, without a shirt. My Aunt hath promissed me an ould one a longe tyme, but her many troubles makes her forgett me.' There is a postmark on the letter, 'Essex Post goes and comes every day.'

Feb 22,
1675.

‘Had not the commands of that noble gentleman, Sir Moundeford Bramston, and my faythfull promise to him made, kept me prisner, more then my gayle and chaines, I would longe since have given you all a visitt att London, but now I will abide the worst, yett itt were good, iff the Judge be morose, to send downe my last reprove, which came when I was from home takeing the ayre. Who brought itt I know not, but I was tould by the gaylour and severall others that itt cam durante bene placito Regis. Iff soe, itt will still save my bacon.’

March 13,
1675.

Dick Hals’ next letter is to Lady Hobart ‘What will become of me I know not in this miserable place. Were I a shup board to be transported to any place (Tangiers excepted) I would be well content. The truth is I have deserved the worst that can bee, but God will not allowe each man his desserts, least more perrish than hee is willinge to loose. Sir John Bramston wrote me word before the Assiyes that he had written to a very good frende of mine att London, I knew he meant one of his generous brothers, to insert me in the Newgate pardon. Iff soe I must be removed by Habeas Corpus to London to pleade itt. . . . Sir John Howell, the Recorder, was very briske with me, I beleve he remeimbred ould stories. Iff my noble Cossen Edmond knew my condition, I doe verily beleve he would doe more for me then all my new frendes. My most Excellent wife beleves mee past further service, in England, therefore neyther comes, nor sends to mee. I am not sorry for itt, but on the other side glad, however she is indebted to mee, if ever I gett out, more then she will willingly pay mee. Iff Sir Ralph will put the Noble brothers in minde of my businesse I may gett out the next Assisses of this place, but iff neyther hee, nor they doe acte, I am sure to lye till I rot, which will not be longe, for the ould distemper is not cured. My humble service to generus Sir Ralph Verney, Madam Cornewallis, Madam Gibbon and her sister, Sir Tory Smith and his Lady and those deare children ; my deare Cossen Anne and my noble Cossen Edmond Verney when you write to Claydon, I most humbly subscribe

most Honored Aunt Your for ever obleidged kinsman and servant.'

A note received by Sir Ralph in Chancery Lane is docketed from 'Dick Halse, a Highwayman—since hanged.' Nov. 1675
'I am in greate want, this cold winter will kill me outright. The bearer sits on horsebacke while I write.'

The charity of Dick's relations was not exhausted, and he writes to Sir Ralph 'next dore to the Black Balcony in ^{Feb. 15,} Lincoln's-Inn Fields in Holburne Row.' 'I wish my ^{1676.} giatfull soule were not confined within the narrow limmitts of a foole's brest. . . . I dare say you beleve I pray for you, and wish you all prosperitie, and that I have just cause to admire and adore that providence, whose carefull eye amoungest soe many greate men, my friends, pitched upon yourselfe to preserve me.' But neither God nor 'greate men' could long help poor Dick against himself; a piteous line reaches Sir Ralph in June '76, written apparently from London. 'I am now arrived at the worst place in England, where sinne and vice abound to an infinite. I trust my newborne grace will defende me and ittselfe from participating thus smek of humers and disorders.'

Three years later Sir Ralph writes to John: Lady Hobart is at Claydon—'well, but somewhat weake of her ^{Aug. 18,} leggs—she brought downe her daughter, her two Maydes & ^{1679.} little Will—And leust they should bee too few she invited Dick Hals too, & never acquainted me with it. He came downe in a cart with her Cooke mayd, but he is at your Brother's house.'

After this he gets an appointment: 'Dick Hals is a Baly ^{Nov. 23,} but dos not dou no duty,' Lady Hobart writes; 'he has tou ^{1679.} men but he is to over so all the balys, for they have cheted hyly; he receives all the mony of the cort, and has rased it much sene he cam in, he is very honest, and I hop will kep so, my stomack is not so good as it was at cladon, I mis your good bear, I find the ale mor havey.'

Dick turns up again in unwonted surroundings. His cousin, Doll Smith, Anne Hobart's grandchild, is to be married at Radcliffe to Mr. Wythers, and these warm-

hearted relations, who have stood by Dick in his darkest days, have bidden him to the wedding.

July 8,
1682.

Edmund Verney, who had been looking after his hay-makers through the long July day, watched from his garden gate the smart cavalcade as it passed through East Claydon in the evening. The great Sir William Smith, with his usual taste for splendour, drove the bridegroom's family down in his coach, with eight men on horseback in attendance. Dick Hals, riding with the other wedding guests, turned into the White House, to greet his old friend as he went by. 'He sent over the next day,' Mun writes, 'by a Messenger-express for a Plaister for his side, from my Chirurgeon, & withall sent word that to morrow is the wedding-day, so Pegg must dance barefoot, otherwise Thom. Smith, M^r Wythers, M^r King & Dick Hals were to have dined with me, but when people marry wives, they cannot come.' There was much merry-making at the wedding; 'ten shillings were given to the Ringers at Buckingham, the fiddlers of Cawcott were sent for.' Hester Denton drove over from Hillesden in her coach; and Parson King made love to Pegg, the bride's lively little sister, in such wise that the aunts and cousins gossiped pleasantly of another festive gathering to be held ere long. The grim highwayman must have been a tragic figure in the peaceful old grey church, and amid the village festivities, the music and dancing, the sunshine and the roses. But Dick could be a gentleman when he chose, and perchance the stories darkly hinted at concerning this strange relation, whose long absences and sudden returns were alike unaccounted for, gave him a romantic interest in the eyes of the bride and her maidens. A few months later he is going about Buckingham with Tom Smith drinking at several houses, 'to make interest for Sir William Smith against a new Parliament,' and most successful in capturing votes instead of purses.

These were the last gleams of light in a stormy day. Hals soon resumed his desperate courses; his one remaining link with better things being his love for his child, whom he

could seldom see To his faithful friend, Edmund Verney, he writes: 'After 30 yeares service I feare I am lost, left to April 20, the wide world, but bee itt how itt will, whiclist the Emperor 1688. and Tuke are at variance, I will not want. All that troubles me is my little boy, but God is able to provide for him. I would if I could.'

Two years more elapse of ignoble stratagems and hair-breadth escapes. The perils of the road are notorious. In 1685 the Banbury coach is attacked 'going upp with a woman and a man riding by it for protection, 2 Horsemen met it & rob'd them all upon Grendon Common, & the Rogues are not taken.' Public feeling was exasperated, and the gentlemen of the road when caught could expect no more mercy. Judge Holt about this time visiting an old friend in prison, whom he had just sentenced, asked after their college chums. The answer was, 'Ah my Lord they are all hanged now but myself & your Lordship.'

'I have noe great news,' writes Dick Hals to Sir Ralph, April 27, 1685. with a dash of his old cheerful courage, 'but only that I thinke to die next weeke. I can doe more then David, for I can number my dayes, haveinge, as I judge, 10 to live from the date hereof, nor doth the law take away my life, but the mallice of Goaler and overheate of a Chiefe Justice, who rubbs too hard upon my ould sores.' He is grateful to Sir Ralph and Edmund for all their past kindnesses; no one would have been so ready to serve them 'had my starrs bene soe kinde to have called me to itt.' 'My tryall comes on the 29th of this mounth, and that day sennight, if not before, wee die. . . . We expected a proclamation or gaole delivery, but that's past hope.' John hears that 'at the Old Baily 23 were condemned to die amongst weh is Dick Halsey'; further efforts to save him were felt to be in vain. May 4, 1685.

Will Hals, the brave and pious sea-captain, praised God with joy for the birth of his only son, and this son was to be hung at Tyburn. Doll Leeko, who had so often helped and forgiven the wayward boy, had passed beyond the reach of evil tidings; Anne Hobart had long ago spent her

influence and exhausted her resources. Sir Ralph was in the midst of his troubled election at Buckingham; 'I am sorry for Dick Hals,' he writes, 'and wish he might have been transported, I trust God will forgive him, and keep us from such sad ends.'

There is no doubt of his fate this time, for John Verney has seen him 'in the cart', Edmund, who has always done justice to the 'few virtues he had among many vices,' has a last kind word to say of him—'Cozen Dick is among the number executed, I am sorry for it, I wish I could have saved him. But if he be gone, I pray God rest his soule in Heaven.'

CHAPTER LI.

ELIZABETH PALMER, JOHN'S CHILD-WIFE.

1680-1685.

As the years went on, John's success in business was more and more sharply contrasted with Edmund's slovenly management of his estate and growing indebtedness; but Edmund's affectionate and generous nature might seem to entitle him to a larger share of domestic happiness than his colder and more prudent brother. After long deliberation, however, and some false starts, John's choice of a wife proved as superior to Edmund's, as his judgment of the value of any other commodity; and Mrs. John Verney is at this time by far the most attractive woman in the family.

The negotiations preceding John's marriage with Elizabeth, eldest child of Ralph Palmer and his wife Alice White, of Little Chelsea, are characteristic of the man. He objects to pay a single guinea that can be saved on the settlements; Sir Ralph tells him that 'Lawyers' clerks on these occasions use to bring in their bill as Apothecaries doe, but the Drs. are feed by discretion & soe are Lawiers . . . but in these things there is noe certainty, some aske more & some lesse according to the quality of the Client, or their owne greedinessse & we never use to dispute with them.' Eventually 'Sir John Coell' refused the five guinea fee which John 'prest him extreamly to take, saying he owed Sir R. V. so much he could not but doe anything for him.'

The difficulties were not on one side only. Mr. Palmer speaks so high, and makes so many stipulations, that John is at length forbid the house. 'A little of your advice Pray

Sir,' he asks Sir Ralph, 'for we are now on a punctilio of honour.' To his mistress, aged fifteen, he writes accepting his dismissal. 'I suppose your worthy father casts in this bone out of the abundance of his love towards you, as being unwilling to part with so beloved a creature Madam, my whole life never mett with any Cross that went so much to my heart as this hath done. I have one favour to begg of you, that is a lock of your Delicate haire, who am too wretched I feare to expect a line from your sweet hand. And now Dearest Madam, I must (with heart-breaking) bidd you for ever adieu; and I pray God that all the felicityes that at any time attended the happiest of your Sex may be heaped on you: May you live plentifully many contented yeares in this world & have Eternall blessings in the next, these be the hearty prayers of Madam, Your Ladiship's Passionate Lover & most unfortunate Servant, John Verney.

'I have no hopes of happiness unless you'll contribute. My father honours you highly and is very much Yr Servant.'

Mocking Nancy tries to cheer him by the assurance that 'E.P. has ferret eyes, and a thousand pimples,' but John fires up so fiercely in defence of his lady's complexion, that the calumny is withdrawn; and peace is concluded on the understanding that E.P. has but three small spots on her face, which are common after an ague, and that her eyes are of unusual size and beauty. 'A gentleman of Chelsey' tells John that his lady 'playes on the Espinetto and Organs and Gittarr, and danceth very well.'

When we hear again, John is providing himself 'with good clothes & store of Trimming to furnish the Comp^y with favours, wch I thinke are 90 odd knotts on my wedding sute.' He writes to his father on his wedding day: 'I am this morning going down to Westminster Abby to meet Mr^s Eliz. Palmer, where after prayers we designe to be Married in Henry 7ths Chappell by Dr. Adam Littleton (where he's a prebend) very privately in our old clothes, none will be at it but her father, mother, brother & Aunt J. White, from thence we goe to the Rummer in Soper Lane in the City, whither



Sir Peter Lely pinx.

ELIZABETH VERNEY (*née* PALMER), FIRST WIFE OF JOHN VERNEY

I invite them & Dr. Littleton to dine with me,¹ after dinner to visit my Lady Gardiner, whence to be gone about 5 or 6 a Clock, then goe eate a Tart at the treating house by Knightsbridge & soe goe home together about 9 at night when all their neighbours may be within their doors' It sounds a very tiring programme for the poor little bride—who had not quite completed her sixteenth year—to be driven about from early morning. They paid their visit to Aunt Gardiner, 'leaving her as innocent as they found her,' 'keeping the news within our own doors from Thursday to Sunday, when wee shall owne it publiquely by our clothes in Chelsey Church and then to be sure all their neighbouring acquaintance of both the Chelseys will come in.' The bride and bridegroom write a charming little letter to Sir Ralph with their joint signatures to tell him that they have now 'performed that grand concern which entitles us both to be your children.'

They drive 'into London to pay visits,' and John sends Sir Ralph 'a Paper Box directed to you though most in it is for my Brother's family. It contains as followeth,—In a June 9, 1680.
paper seal'd a Paire of white Gloves and a Payre of Colloburd Gloves laced with Black flanders lace, which I desire your acceptance of, And if ye fingers be too long for you, Thom :

¹ The bill of John Verney's wedding dinner for seven persons 'at the Rummer in Queen Street London.' May 27th, 1680.

	s.	d.
Beer-ayle	0	3 0
Wine	0	11 0
Orings	0	1 0
A dish of fish	1	0 0
2 Geese	0	8 6
4 fatt Chikens	0	8 0
2 Rabets	0	3 0
A dish of peese	0	6 0
8 hartey Chokes	0	5 0
A dish of Strabreys	0	6 0
A dish of Chereys	0	5 6
	<u>3</u>	<u>17 0</u>

Servants 1s.

Hobart sayth he will alter them for you when in towne. All Genoa Gloves are long fingerd. A payre of Green fringed Gloves for my Brother, White & Collour'd Lace Gloves for my Sister; Pinke Coulour'd trimd Gloves for Master Ralph, Skye Coulour'd trimd Gloves for Master Munsey; White Gloves trimd with Green &c for my little neece, And one of my wife's Wedding Garters for Master Ralph as one of her Bridemen. These tokens of a Wedding I desire them to weare for my sake.'

Nancy Nicholas testifies that the bride has 'very handsome wedding clothes, well-chosen.' 'Lady Osborne's and Lady Gardiner's coach-full, Lady Hobart and a coach-full and the Dr. and his coach-full' come to call three or four days after the wedding. Nancy sends notice in advance, that Mrs John may have her best clothes on. Aunt Osborne wishes to receive her, but laments that the heat 'has turned her cream to curds and that therefore she could not be within.'

Mrs. John Verney is never mentioned in the letters without some affectionate epithet. Child as she was, she at once took the place in the family which the eldest son's wife had never been able to fill. She visited the schoolboys of the family at Harrow, and mothered the tall nephews of her own age at East Claydon, as she did her undergraduate brother at Oxford, who poured out to her all his confidences and was proud to entertain her in his rooms at Trinity College. To her forlorn little niece, Molly Verney, she was specially kind, sending down 'a Paste-Board Chimney & all the implements with it, in a box for little Misse,' at seven years old; and when she was in her teens, looking after her clothes and her studies at Mrs. Priest's genteel establishment for young ladies at Chelsea, where the girl is said to improve wonderfully.

Her gracious kindness makes her home, 'over against the coffee-house in Hatton St. Hatton Gardens,' a happy meeting place for all the young ones of the family. She packs her coach to its utmost capacity, to take the Stewkeley girls to the 'Grand Ball at Chelsey School,' where Moll Verney and

Betty Denton distinguish themselves as dancers. 'I wish you could have seen "pretty Miss."' she writes to the latter's flighty mother, Hester Denton.

Sir Ralph was her devoted servant, and her grave and matter-of-fact husband, some twenty-five years older than herself, never ceased to be her lover during the six short years of their married life. During their rare separations, their letters reveal the depth of tender sentiment which underlay the cautious reserve of the worldly-wise man of affairs. He writes to her while she is paying some family visits in Bucks and he is in charge of the first baby: 'Dearest Deare, I ^{Sept 24,} wrote you this morning by the Coach Since which I have ^{1681.} receaved your pretty lines under the 22th and for your tender Expressions there is nothing but a reciprocall love can make you returns, and that be confident you have. Pretty Preticus is grown much, and her nurse to that degree of bigness that you can't Immagine. . . . I have put up in a paper Box directed to you, your Black Crape Manto, to dress you in when the mornings are cold. . . . Make much of your deare selfe and 'twill doe comfort to me then, to heare of your wellfare and pleasure. My Mother hath bought y^e Child a Morelly Coate Striped Yellow & Black'--which sounds very unbecoming to a baby's complexion--'and Some lace for Capps, that w^{ch} you left being, as she thought, too narrow. She hath put that on under it I thinke. I hope you were made much of at Hillesden, Radcliff & Stow, otherwise the Ladyes there loose there reputation with me. Pray Send one of yo^r Shoes to Alesbury or Buck^m to have a pare of Cloggs fitted to it, that you may walke about without takeing in Wett at your feet & what letters you receave from me either burn 'em or locke 'em up in y^e little cabinett: I thanke you for your ten thousand kisses and wish I had one halfe dozen from you in y^e mean time; but for this vacancy we'll have y^e more when I returne to you whom God preserve. I rest your Truly loveing and most affectionate Deare J^{no} Verney. I have had my hare cutt.'

Mrs. John sends him excellent reports of the business matters which are referred to her in his absence; she is

June 25,
1683.

much in request, but refuses invitations, only supping with her husband's old aunts, who delight in her company; 'all pleasure to me I find is nothing without you. . . . After church my cousens Stewkley sent for me to goe to Spring Gardens, with them & M^{rs} Dickenson, with a consort of Musick of Jack Stewkley's bringing, I thanked them but I did not care to goe because of M^{rs} Dickenson, but if she had not bin there I should not have gon with so many wild young men as there was, & had need take care who one gos abroad with these times. . . . I rest your most affectionate but maloncoly wife till your return E. V.'

June 28,
1683.

'Deare Heart,' he replies, 'I thanke you for your newes & for writing a long letter, for I could be all day reading your lines. . . . Now to employ you.' Here follows a list of commissions with such minute directions as Sir Ralph was wont to give Mary forty years before. His wife is to prepare for a guest. Nedd, his father's 'under butler & pheasant keeper,' is coming up from Claydon to fetch John's horses, and he is to stay three or four days that their man Robert may show him the town; he is not to sleep with him, however, 'first because of Robert's sore throat & 2^d because that Bedd is but small & Nedd is gone bigg, soe it will not hold them. . . . he is your acquaintance soe I need not bid you make him welcome.'

June 28,
1683.

'Dearest Joy,' she writes when he was going on from Claydon to look after their farms at Wasing, 'I hope you will make no long stay, for I long to se thee, I would not live this life allways without you for all the world. My duty to Sir Ralph and tell him I wish myselfe with him.' He sends her in return 'everything that the Lovingest of husbands can express to the best of wives, & love to the little ones not forgetting the kicker in the dark.'

'Dearest,' he writes again, 'I'me very Sorry John my Coachman Should be soe greate a Clowne to you & soe Sullen now I am from home; but t'is the nature of the Beast. I was so angry about it that I did presently agree with one here who is not a sightly fellow, but I thinke he is a better natur'd man then John, but (doe not speake of it to

anybody,) he never drove a Coach but once, but he is a very good Cart or Waggon driver & hath of a long time had a mind to live with me. . . . Pray as often as you see our Excellent Father & Mother let them have my Duty, with Love & Service to the rest of that family : & Blessing to my Children : and for thyself I send thee all the Kindness & Love which can be Express'd by your Deare Jn. Verney.'

Mr. Randall Davies, the historian of the Parish of Chelsea, has found a deed of 1746 by which Ralph, 1st Earl Verney purchases from his cousin Ralph Palmer the Chelsea house 'in which his mother was brought up, and which was the scene of so many charming incidents recorded in his father's letters.'

John keeps up his correspondence with the East ; his friend the Pasha of Aleppo is said to have fallen in a great battle with the Poles. 'Our Aleppo letters acquaint us of a fire which hath burnt 3 or 400 shopps & had not abundance of rain fallen ye same night t'would have done much more mischief. S^t Thomas Bludworth's eldest son dyed by y^e Inward breaking of a Veine : And Ald^r Burdett's second son is alsoe dead by accident, Thus : Being a Coursing, the Hare refug^d in a hole & he hewing y^e hare squeake & beleiving a Dogg was gott into y^e refuge, & ye hare within reach, put in his arm, butt something bitt him by the hand, which payn'd him soe much as to force him out of y^e field, home, where he instantly had y^e Doctors & Surgeons but to little purpose for he dyed at 4 a clock in y^e afternoon & was bitt between 8 and 9 the same morning, one or two more are dead of fluxes, This we account a greate Mortality to heare of at once, from that healthy plase.'

Feb. 6,
1679.

John has become an important man in the City ; his prudence carried him through some critical times when 'so many citizens have failed, that the first question every day asked is, Who is broke to-day?' 'The great discourse of the town is of Tompson & Nellhorpe the bankers who are failed. . . . Hynde & his partners have refused further payments. . . . the like is said of some others wch I am glad of, for I would have all bankers broke, they ruining the trade

March 30,
1679.

July 14,
1679.

of the whole kingdom.' Besides his shares in the Levant and East Indian Companies, he is in the Guinea trade, and when the Royal African Company 'has become as poor as a courtier,' John goes down to Windsor with Sir Gabriel Roberts. They have 'some discourse with Sec. Sunderland & afterwards with his Majestie, about the Company's business.' They witness 'the Portugal Ambassador's public audience before the K. and Qu. together, after morning chapel, & their dinner in public.' The Company is conducted with old-fashioned honesty; 'we cannot have 1st dividend, but we pay off our debts that if the Co. be broke nobody may be sufferers but those that are of it.' John's bitter complaint that English commerce is ruined by politicians meddling in merchants' affairs, 'for they like a flood break down all,' might have been written in the 'moral meridian' of our present controversies. There is some money left in the City nevertheless, for the people throng and press to see 'the rich clothes and jewels worn by the Lady Mayoress,' who has a famous 'collar of pearls, each as big as the top of one's finger.'

Nov 3,
1679

The City is in an unsettled state, and 'tis a wonder the Cittizens breake soe fast, being England hath had almost all the Trade of the World, since the warrs have been in Germany.' John writes to Edmund of a great fire in Constantinople, which has ruined many English traders there, and of a merchant in the City of London he had known at Aleppo, who 'is this weeke broke, and is 2000^l worse then nothing; these are misfortunes which you Country Gentlemen are not acquainted with, nor may you ever be, shall be the hearty prayer of yr most aff: brother.'

The influx of skilled foreign artisans after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 added to the eventual prosperity of the country, but for a time disturbed the labour market; John writes, 'Here hath been mutinous riseings, by the Weavers on this score, there is of late found out a loome that ridds worke soe fast, that one man with it can doe as much as 20 after the old fashion (by wch meanes all Ribboning would be much cheaper) thus they pretend must

of necessity ruine many familyes amongst them, soe they will have these new looms burnt, & 2 they served so on Munday, & on tuesday went about ye same worke, but he that expected them, being fitted for a defence (of his property) kill'd one & wounded two more, whereat ye rest fledd, but yesterday, they return'd to him (who was alsoe fledd) & burnt his loomes in St Geo: fields in Southwarke, these risings hath made the Watches be doubled all over the citty, besides some Comp^{es} of ye Trained bands, who every night keep guard on y^e Royall Exchange.' In contrast to the starving weavers, there is the competition of the rich for the possession of a fashionable toy: 'The Lord Geo: Berkely's Elephant (who is 5 foot & 4 Inches high) is to be sold by ye Candle at ye East India house sett up at £1000 & to advance £20 every bidding.'

Amongst Sir Ralph's child-friends, John's four little ones—Elizabeth (*b.* 1681), Mary (*b.* 1682), Ralph (*b.* 1683), and Margaret (*b.* 1685)—held a very special place in his heart. They were bright, attractive children, and every incident in their lives was reported to their grandfather. The eldest girl was his godchild; the old Doctor stood as his proxy, and wrote to Sir Ralph after the christening: 'As I have promised & vowed that y^r marvellous pretty Gille "Betty Verney" shall forsake the Divill & all his works, soe be sure y^e take care thereof when I shall be gathered to my ffathers.' Margaret is named after her great-grand-mother, Mun and Nancy Nicholas and Hester Denton are the gossips. Cary wishes her a boy, 'for I find our sex is not much vallued in our age, bot before 'tis a woman I hope they will be better esteemed.'

The father and grandfather were in real distress when the 'footboy Harry being about the coach with Ralph who was in it, shut the Coach door upon the Child's fingers, quite pull'd off one of Ralph's nailes off of his fingers with some little bruises.' The hero of this adventure had now reached the mature age of three, and the family had scarcely recovered the shock of the death of Ralph, Mun's eldest son, when little Ralph and Mary fell dangerously ill. John's

anxieties were divided between them and his wife, who was looking sadly thin and worn, he tried to persuade her to go to Claydon while he remained in charge of the little ones. Sir Ralph, who was afraid of infection and fatigue for both of them, wrote urgently to John: 'I wish my Daughter were here & you with her, for you can do nothing about your children, 'tis not a Man's employment, but Woemen's work, & they both understand it & can performe it much better then any Man can doe. A good nursekeeper is better then Ten men, therefore think uppon it before you resolve to stay with them, & God direct you for the best.'

'Molly and Ralph continue as they were, very ill of a feaver & pains with a short Cough very fast, they will not tell where their paines are, nor will they take anything but small Beare, nor that if anything be mingled with it, that we have trouble enough. Those things that they love so very well when in health as Sugar, Candy, Pruines etc. they will not now touch, nor will they let the Doctors touch their hands, but pray that neither their Unkle Dr. nor Mr. Gelthorpe the Apothecary may not come to 'em. God be their Phisitian,' writes the distracted father, '& spare their lives.'

Edmund at Claydon cannot hold out hopes that they will be 'Cured Hereabouts, for all our most able & Eminent Doctors of this Vicinage, Have Left off theyr Practice, & are Growne Vertuous Stoicks.'

The crafty 'Babbies,' who would neither be 'blouded nor vomited,' were perforce left to Nature and 'small Beare,' and falsified their physicians' predictions by making a good recovery. Their mother, whose ailments were less definite, was gradually getting weaker, although her bright spirits made it difficult for those who loved her to believe that there was any real cause for anxiety.

CHAPTER LII.

SOME LUCKS ELECTIONS.

1685.

THE sorrow for Charles the Second's death was very genuine; a long-suffering nation seemed to feel they could have 'better spared a better man.' 'Everybody is in a great damp since they have hard the doolfull news,' writes Sir Ralph's housekeeper on the succeeding Sunday; 'Mr. Butterfield is not well, so wee had neither prayers nor sarmon today at Middle Cladon.' Feb. 8,
1685

Alexander Denton sends up a messenger from Hillesden in haste to ask Sir Ralph's good counsel. 'The King's death is a great trouble to all his good subjects in the Country. . . . I believe never a better prince or man lived in the world or will be more missed than he, but beeing God Almighty was soe pleased to take him to himselfe, & rob this nation of soe great a blessing. . . . give me leave to aske whether it be my duty for to goe into mourning. . . . being in the Country, or if it be necessary for me, then whether my wife must doe the like, & whether it must be black cloth or Crape. I would not be singular.' He finally decides that a country squire may save the cost of 'blacks' by keeping much at home, as he hears the Coronation will be shortly, 'when everybody may be out of it againe.' Lady Gawdy writes: 'The generall calamety by the lose of our good King dus deeply strike my harte & makes my famely concerns but an attendant to the morning for him, but our new King has offered all the consolation wee could hope, by his gracious declarations; longe may hee live to be a new nursing father to the Church & his people as hee' Feb. 12,
1685.

has promised.' 'My sonn is returned in helth to his own home, but the loss of the late King has put new sadnes all over him, which I cannot but love him all the better for. . . . he is mine both by love and nature'

Sir Ralph tells his friends that 'great application will be made to fill up all vacant places,' and advises Sir Charles Gawdy to come to town at once, for 'there are certaine Criticall Moments when men that observe them may build their Fortunes.'

His wife, Lady Mary, is too anxious about her father's health to enter into such schemes, Lord Denbigh is in Oxford for advice, and as Sir Ralph 'lives so near & knows all the eminent doctors there, shee longs to hear his opinion of Dr. Ratcliffe.' Sir Ralph assures her 'that Dr. Ratcliffe is generally esteemed for skill & practice one of the most eminent doctors in Oxford, & most constantly employ'd by all persons of Quality both in that country & at Astrop Wells.' John thought less well of him: 'Every one that hears of Dr. Ratcliff admires that Coz. Denton would send a 2ⁿ^d time to so careless a physician, for certainly if no other Dr. in Oxford could please him, he had better send to London than to be valued under a bottle of wine or the seeing of a horse run . . . Dr. Ratcliff I hear intends to set up in London after he has taken his degree at Oxford.' His skill did not avail to prolong the earl's life beyond the summer.

May 1,
1632.

Sir Charles Gawdy has a strange 'little gift' to ask of the new King 'A country-man a mile off his house hanged himself, his personal estate was worth 150*l*.,' the King granted it him, but 'my Lord Castlehaven & severall others . . . tho' the advantage was but small . . . so prest & re-begged it of the King' that Sir Charles fears his first promise will not hold. Sir Ralph recommends him as 'a most accomplit Gentleman, extreamly civil obligeing in all his expressions, & well worthy of his Maj^{ty}'s favour.'

John Verney was at Reading when King James was proclaimed, and the people 'made Bonfires and rang the Bells.' The satisfaction was short lived; the town had not done gossiping about the poverty of Charles's burial and

the misfit of the coffin, when it was rumoured that 'three Scotchmen were clapt up in prison for treason, for saying a papist King should not raine long,' and it became apparent that the King's actions did not bear out his first judicious words. During the next three months the country was violently excited over the elections.

Since the Parliament summoned to Oxford in March 1681 and dissolved within eight days, the faithful Commons had never met, and as the time went on, it was evident that the Court party were prepared to use violent measures to secure a compliant majority. The boroughs had been attacked in the previous reign, charters had been forfeited, and when new ones were granted 'the elections of members were taken out of the hands of the inhabitants, and restrained to the corporation men' (Burnet). Buckingham had received such a charter in the previous July, and the two borough members were elected by the Mayor and twelve Aldermen, down to the Reform Bill of 1832.

The new Mayors and Sheriffs were all in the Government interest; the excitement was great in the country, and there was an unusual number of candidates. The Whigs by their ready belief in the calumnies of Titus Oates, and their cruel persecution of the Papists, had brought about a reaction against themselves. With a discredited and disheartened Opposition the country seemed in danger of losing some of its hardly won liberties, for want of leaders in the impending struggle. Sir Ralph in his seventy-third year, with the increasing conservatism of age, and a sobering experience of civil war and anarchy such as none of the younger generation possessed, was inclined to trust the new King, and was unwilling at first to stand against the Government. But the electioneering tactics employed on the King's side roused the best instincts of the old Parliament man, and a more personal motive may have quickened his decision. It was rumoured that the young Squire of Hillesden was eager to come forward, if Sir Ralph pronounced himself too infirm to stand again. The older members of the family were aghast at the presumption of a youth whose grandfather

had sat with Sir Ralph in the Long Parliament. Sir Ralph straightened his bent back, took posset for his cough, felt that he was not as old as he had imagined, and forthwith accepted the invitation from Buckingham.

Alexander Denton was in fact thirty years of age and the father of several children; but he understood the situation, anxiously cleared himself from any suspicion of disloyalty to his godfather and oldest friend, his only thought had been 'to keep out a stranger, thinking it as fit for me, as any such body,' and he now put his 'small interest' entirely at Sir Ralph's disposal.

Sir Ralph Verney therefore and his cousin of Stowe, who had won the seats for the Whigs in 1681, were to contest the Buckingham Borough again. Sir Richard Temple was not popular with his relatives at Claydon or at Hillesden—a busy schemer 'making all things secret, and keeping nothing secret'—but he was too influential a person to be overlooked; he had a following of moderate men of both parties, and protested moreover that he would rather stand with his old colleague and kinsman 'than all mankind besides.' The Tory candidates were Lord Latimer and Sir John Busby of Addington (the lawyer whom Mary Verney had seen during the troubles waxing rich when other people grew poor), now a county magistrate of some local importance. Two years before, Edmund Verney had been concerned with the politics of the borough, and wrote to John about them: 'I mett Sr Richard Temple at my ffathers, and at his Request I went with Him to Buckingham to Retreive a lost Game, about choosing a new Bayly, wch Wee Didd Effect, with much adoe, if the adverse Party There Had Gayned that Point of Choosing a Bayly among their owne Creatures, Sr Richard Temple Hadd never Been Chosen Member of Parliament at Buckingham more while Hee Lived in all Human probability, Lett Sr Richard ffancye to Himselfe what He will to the Contrary: & I Think I Didd Him no smale service There, for Hadd I not Been with Him at that Time I may asseure you without Vanity That Sr Richards greatest Ennemy Robinson Hadd Been Bayly:

May 7,
1683.

Whereof now Mr. Hillesdon Sr Richard's friend is Bayly. . . .

'It was much discoursed of to Sr Richard's dishonour to sneake downe in his arch Enemy Robinson's Coach, tho' Sr Richard vindicates Himself by saying He didd it to oblige Buckingham, yet no Body There understands it, But Reckons it an incomparable meannesse of spirit in Sr Richard to stoope on yt fashion to Robinson on purpose as is said to sweeten the Bitternesse of his Enemy, for you must Know that this Robinson is a Lace Buyer and Hath sett up a flying Coach betweene London and Buckingham: and this insolent fellow at a ffayre at Bristol in a dispute betweene Him and one Hartly, another Lace Buyer and Burghesse of Bucks, publickly called Sr Richard Temple Rogue & Rascall and Knave &c.'

Sir Ralph's electioneering morality was at least two centuries in advance of his time. He was 'content to entertain the Mayor and Aldermen before the election in a reasonable manner, to join Sir Richard in giving £10 or £20 a peece to the poor, to pay all charges on the day, and, after it, to treat the Mayor & Aldermen & their Wives at a Dinner, at as high a value as Sir Richard thinks fit, by way of thanks to them for their love & kindness. But to treat the Mobile at all the Alehouses in the Parish & to make them Drunke, perhappes a Month beforehand, as is usual in too many places uppon such occasions, I shall not joyne in that Expencc, I had rather sit still, than gaine a place in Parliament by see much debauchery.' Alexander Denton was 'clearly of Sir Ralph's opinion against barrells of ale,' holding 'that a man makes himself a slave that is chosen after that manner,' but with him it was merely a pious opinion that did not interfere with his habits, whereas Sir Ralph's principles and practice were alike the despair of his supporters.

Mun, who is in town with his father, precodes him to Claydon. Sir Richard has the writ brought to him at Uxbridge; he gave a crown to the bearer and Mun gave him another, '& five guineas more to Mr. Barnewell at

Aylesbury.' Sir Richard put the writ in his pocket till the moment should be propitious for delivering it. Mun entertains him at the White House, whence he writes to his father: ' . . . I come newly from wishing Sir Richard good night, he lyeth in my great Parlor Chamber, the Clock hath just struck one, & I begin to be sleepy, so I will to Bedd, but first say my Prayers for your good Health & prosperous voyage'

March 10,
1685.

They meet again for the Assizes at Aylesbury, 'being the wettest & the windiest day that I have scene,' Sir Ralph writes to John. 'Tis a Mayden Assise, for none will beehanged, but 3 or 4 small offenders are Burnt in the Hand. Your brother was of the Grand Jury, & soe was my Cozen Denton. The Sheriffe kept a noble shrevalty, Mr. Wood a Turkey Marchant is heere, I think he married one of the Sheriffs Daughters. Sir Tho Tyrrell's Butler that killed a Deerstealer that was stealing Rabets in Thornton Parke is found guilty of Mauslaughter. Will Chaloner indited one that lopped the Trees about the Schole house at Steeple Claydon, but the Grand Jury would not finde the Bill.'

March 13,
1685.

Nothing is talked of in the coaches and at the inns but the contests. The Whig candidates for the Borough of Aylesbury are quarrelling amongst themselves. Sir Ralph arriving at Amersham finds 'the Towne full of Ale & Noyse & Tobacco, being the Election day,' and late as it is, he drives on to Missenden for quiet. 'A Passenger says, Lee & Ingoldsby are like to carry it at Aylesbury,' he writes, 'noe body can yet determine it. My Cough & Cold is badd enough, God helpe me.' Sir Ralph had a recipe from Dr. R. Lydall of Oxford 'for a snayle Water, & a stronger Snayle Water for a cough,' with a 'Hemlock & oxycrate' poultice made by boiling vinegar and honey.

March 19,
1685.

Sir Ralph's boastful neighbour, Cousin Smith of Radcliffe, has gone up to contest the Shire of Middlesex. John Stewkeley is his agent, and writes to Sir Ralph: 'The candidates were Sir Wm. Smith, Sir Charles Gerard, Sir Hugh Middleton, Mr. Hawtry, Mr. Ranton & Mr.

Johnson of Mile End. Sir W. Smith came into the field attended with about 200 men, most on horseback, but tis thought not neare halphe of them had votes. He finding his party so inconsiderable in respect of the rest, desisted, & gave all his votes to Sir Hugh Middleton but he lost it by a 150 votes at least, & Sir C. Gerard & Mr. Hawtrey who joyned interest carried it. They were both of them thought to be very honest gentlemen, this is the 3rd time Sir Hugh Middleton hath stood & spent a great deal of money & missed it.'

By the end of March Mun has delivered 'the Precept to the Mayor of Buck^m, so hee may go to Election when hee pleaseth. My father,' he writes to John, 'hath 7 of the 13 electors pretty firme to Him, so that if the Mayor do not trick us by going to choose when some of our party are abroad upon their businesses, my father must needs carry it tho' I perceive Hee would willingly decline it. . . . Sir Richard Pigott is dead.' Lady Gardiner writes: 'I cannot bot lament Sir Richard Pigot, being a good man and an excellent old fation hous-Keeper, bot he was old & I pray God bles you with eas & happyness to his age & as many more years as God pleases.' Sir Ralph tells John how deeply he feels the death of this 'good old friend & neighbour; his Lady is very ill & my cousin Tom Pigot who is now heire to his uncle is somewhat amiss too & also severall of the servants, & all from colds, I pray God fit us all for Heaven.'

March 30,
1685.

April 1,
1685.

It was in the very crisis of the election contests, that friends and rivals met over the old knight's grave. 'Sir Richard Pigott was buried very honorably,' writes Sir Ralph to John, ' & at a considerable charge, with 2 new Mourning Coaches & a Hearse, one of which Coaches & the Hearse had 6 Horses apiece. Wee that bore up the pall had Rings, Scarfs, Hat-bands, Shammee Gloves of the best fashion and Sarsenet Escutcheons delivered to us; the rest of the Gentry had Rings, all the servants gloves. Wee had burnt wine & Biscuits in great plenty, all the very servants had burnt wine & Biscuit. I thank God my Cough is something better. I had forgotten to tell you that there were

April 5,
1685.

abundance of Escutcheons & all Sir Richard's servants were in mourning.'

Buckingham was now the scene of plots and counterplots and petty intrigues which lasted for many weary weeks. Sir Ralph's sons worked devotedly for him, each after his manner, Mun, gouty, cordial, and lavishly hospitable, freely sacrificed his digestion to his principles, and by constant carouses with the Buckingham electors, sought to counteract the ill effect of his father's austerity. He tells John 'as a very pleasant jest under the rose,' how after one of these feasts, 'Sir R. Temple & his man Monsieur Bennett, upon falling out, did exchange Dry Blows with one another,' as they drove back to Stowe at night in Sir R. Temple's coach.

The White House, lying as it did on the high road between Aylesbury and Buckingham, lacked not picturesque gatherings of county worthies booted and spurred, riding to and fro between these centres of political activity; such guests were sure of a hearty welcome and a potent stirrup-cup, in return for the last bit of election gossip. Sir Ralph sends Mun a fresh supply of sherry-sack and advises him to keep 'sugar ready and the nutmeg cut but not grated, for I see the Philistines are coming upon you.' 'Mr. Harry Wharton,' Mun writes, 'Sir Peter Tyrill & Captain Lile, Mr. Knowles & Mr. Haynes &c., called & drank at my Gates without alighting, & while they were there comes Sir Richard Temple, Sir Francis Leigh, Mr. Chesney, Mr. Anderson &c., & came all into my yard & drank; then our 5 Aldermen that were alighted at my house, remounted & waited on Sir R. T. to Buck^m. A little after he went away, my Lord Latimer went by in a Coach & six Horses, & about 14 Horse with him besides. My cosen Robin Dormer called in here, & says that he came from Addington & that Sir J. Busby is become a most mighty Tory.'

John, on the other hand, with his clear head and business capacity, obtained legal opinions on disputed questions, and bestirred himself amongst his town friends, whether lawyers, City merchants, or court ladies, to defeat

local wirepullers by using tactics in higher circles not unlike their own. The brothers took counsel together upon every detail that might help or hinder their father's return to Parliament

Mun reports that 'if my Lord Latimer will lay downe 300*l*. for building the Townehall, He may prevayle to make his election sure.' This offer repeated at intervals 'much balances with mercenary spirits, and My Lord puts in hard to be chosen.' . . . 'There are 3 inveterate against us, Mr. Hugh Ethersey, Mayor, Mr. Hartley & one Alderman Atterbury, but I hope we shall get 7 on our side & then it is not much matter for the rest. Mr. Mayor hath all along done all he can against my father . . . tomorrow morning I shall be going early to Buck^m. ad explorandum Hostem.' If a voter declined to be bribed, at least he might be kidnapped, and Henry Hayward, a disreputable Buckingham barber, was suddenly arrested for debt. As he was wont to shave the Verneys, Edmund concluded that 'my barber' was a safe vote. Great efforts were accordingly made to pay his debts, and to get him out of the Fleet. When this was done, Hayward 'coachd it down to Buckingham with his daughter,' in great state; but knowing his value 'my barber' treated his patron with distant politeness, and did not wish to entangle himself with any pledges, or, as local opinion expressed it, 'the gaol bird has flown clear of them all.'

John Coleman and the rest of Sir Ralph's people are working hard for him in the borough, the Cook Nicholas is doing some efficient canvassing on his own account. 'The popular are resolved to set up two against the Bayliffe & Burgesses, & they that the Bayliffe & Burgesses chuse, the popular will not. . . . only the Cook thinks that one of the Constables being Sir Ralph's Saddler may be persuaded.'

The Addington carriages and horses are constantly seen in Buckingham; 'Sir John Busby rode through it twice, going and coming from Maydes Morton, and each time he alighted at the Mayor's house.' He is also paying court to the village of 'Leathenborough.' Sir Ralph can hardly hope to overtake his civilities; Lord Latimer's men are

March 23,
1685. making their last efforts, but 'my Lord will not come from town unless he can get 7 of the 13 to subscribe for him.'

April 2,
1685. John sends a bit of gossip on the all-absorbing topic of the seven Buckingham votes. 'Being yesterday at Nancy Nicholas' she pulled out a letter, tore out the name & bad me read it, twas I saw a Clerk's hand & began Sir.' Then the story of these infinitely petty intrigues is told again, how there are six votes for Sir Ralph and six for Lord Latimer, how 'a Draper being incognito had declared for Sir Ralph, but that this should prove of no avail.' Nancy left the room, and John, determined to discover the writer, flew to the place 'where the crumpled paper lay she had flung into the fire, but lighting on a Scotch coale it tumbled off into the Chimney, so I took it up & opened it and found the name to be Wm. Baker, he that married Mr. Ethersey's daughter.' Sir Ralph replies that Mr. Ethersey, the mayor, 'is wholly governed by my Lord Chief Justice . . . his sisters are heartily for me & cry & speak openly how much they are ashamed of their Brother. . . . I wish I had never been concerned in the business, for tis very Chargeable and woonderful Troublesome.' Jack Ethersey, the attorney, is busy at Buckingham with his brother the mayor, 'Chaque Diable a son tour,' writes Jack Verney, 'once I was desired to be his friend when he putt in for a place in the Citty & I recommended him to some of the Chief Grocers for to be a Clark of their hall, & it may be in my power again (before he be a Judge) to doe him an other kindness or its contrary, which of 'em he may expect will be according to his carriage to you. . . . Lady Osborne told me my L^d of D[evonshire] rails exceedingly at Sir R. T. and saith he will bring him on his knees in the house for keeping the precept 6 weeks after he had it, before delivered, and much such stuff. . . .'

Sir Ralph replies, 'Lord Latimer kept the precept 5 weeks when it was noe crime & tis usually donn in very many places. . . . Sir Rich. kept it but 17 dayes after hee first had it, many persons keep it much longer, therefore

I beleeeve Ly. Osborne understands not what she says about it.'

Stewkeley writes that 'L'Estrange & one Mr. Chauncy, a very young man he is of y^e Winslo, & a mighty favouritt of the L^d Ch: Just. Jeff: 's are chosen for Winton.'

John had been running after Mr. Fall, a London solicitor known to the aldermen at Buckingham, who might help if he could go down to work for Sir Ralph, but he finds him 'tyed by the leg to the Treasury office.' 'Dr. Denton says that the towne of Buck^m was anciently against our family,' John continues, 'My Grandfather having gotten the Assizes from Buck^m to Wickham, & that you had angered them in a piece of Justice. But the Dr being just then going into the Lady Sherard's door, I had not time to know of him in what, or to pump out whether he said this of his own knowledge or had it from your good friend in a corner A D[enton].' In 1679 'the king promised L^d Latimer that the Assizes should be at Buck^m, but Sir Thos. Lee got Monmouth to beg they should be at Aylesbury, which was granted.' History repeats itself; some two hundred years later, Sir Harry Verney, when candidate for the same seat, was reproached with having removed the Quarter sessions from Buckingham to Aylesbury.

Sir Ralph was going about in Buckingham, coughing in the cold March winds, longing to be out of the ale and the noise, and peremptorily sent for to return, whenever he sought a little rest at Claydon. There was always a special reason. He must not be absent on market days; the mayor had complained that he had not called upon him of late; my Lord Latimer's man had given the wives and daughters of the burgesses a treat very recently, and Sir Ralph should do the same; and so on. Cook Nicholas felt sadly that his artistic cold collations were thrown away upon the thirsty aldermen. 'Wine is the most acceptable treat for them, with Anchois or such like thing, to draw downe Liquor.'

'I wish Buckingham election were over,' writes Lady April 1,
Gardiner, 'and that you might have time to mend your' 1685

health, which is of chifest moment to me, not bot I hope all will goe as I wod have it . . . there is like to be a good time for blistering, warm whether being best for that, & I am shur if you due not begin to take the asses milk quickly, you will have bot a short tim to take it.'

John was also urgent with his father to be blistered, but Sir Ralph felt that he could not stand any more worries till after the polling day. His chief solace was an aromatic 'dish' which he made for himself at night; 'a noble fuddler of coffee,' Dr. Denton called him. He had laid in a frugal provision of two half-pound packets of coffee at 3s a lb., which he hoped would carry him through his fatigues; but he was far from being at the end of them. It was now known that the polling for Buckingham would be delayed until after the Knights for the Shire had been chosen.

So far the Whigs had done well in the Bucks boroughs, but the great county struggle was yet to come. Dr. Denton reports 'mad work in many elections the Lord Chief Justice [Jeffreys] behaves himself bravely in all his circuit,' which he made into an electioneering tour; he was then detained in Essex, his temper being further soured by 'a fit of the stone.' Jeffreys was known to the Verneys; Mun had dined with him in town, and he owned a house in the county, Bulstrode Manor. Charles II. visited him in 1678, '& causing Sir George Jeffreys to sit down at table with him, he drank to him seven times.' His favour at Court was still in the ascendent, and he was already famous for the violence and brutality of his temper. He was resolved to bring the terrible power of his personal influence to bear, in order to overawe the electors at Aylesbury. This contest was felt to be a crucial one. The candidates were Lord Brackley, Mr. Wharton, and Mr. Hackett. Lord Brackley, by his own merit, and as son of the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Bridgewater, had won the support not only of the Whigs but of most of the moderate Tories of the county. His mother, Lady Elizabeth Cavendish, was famous for 'her winning behaviour and most obliging conversation,' her beauty, wit, and piety, and Lord Brackley seems to have inherited something of her charm.

Thomas, eldest son of Philip Lord Wharton, was a man of a very different type; he had a great reputation for wealth and extravagance. A popular sportsman, he had just been thrown by a rearing horse at Newport races, but recovered in time to rally his friends for a still more exciting contest. Able and unscrupulous, he represented a powerful Whig family living close to Aylesbury; he was personally obnoxious to King James, as having brought up the Exclusion Bill from the House of Commons to the Bar of the House of Lords.

Thomas Hackett, the Tory candidate, 'an unknown young gentleman of the neighbourhood of Newport Pagnell,' was Jeffreys' tool in his stubborn resolution at all costs to keep out Wharton. In case this should fail, it was reported that the Lord Chief Justice, 'with the rest of his gang, would at the last promote Hackett's election for Buckingham.'

Sir Ralph sent word to his agent to work up the tenants, and peremptorily desired Mr. Butterfield to exert himself in Mr. Wharton's interest 'among his brethren.' The rector, usually so compliant, returned an evasive answer; he would see which side would most benefit the Church; meanwhile he and Mr. Townshend were reported to be very busy; it was evident that the clergy would vote Tory. Persons of quality are bestirring themselves all over the county; 'my Lady Peter Tyrrell,' Sir Walter Raleigh's granddaughter, has been met 'in her coach & 4, driving furiously' to London: and Sir Thomas Bludworth has been heard to say that 'his brother the L^d Ch: Just: Jefferys will be at the Election of Knights of the Shire.'

Whatever weariness Sir Ralph confessed to in private, he was at his post when the great struggle commenced; his letter describes the unscrupulous tactics the Lord Chief Justice was prepared to employ:

'Ailsbery, Thursday night.

'On Tuesday night I came heather, I thought the Pole would have been continued here till the Election had been ended, but some say Mr. Wharton having many more voices than Mr. Hackett, my L^d. Ch. Justice got the Sheriff to

April 8,
1685.

adjourn the Poll to Newport (which is 15 very long miles from hence) in the heart of Mr. Hackett's friends, & tis thought it will be adjourned on Sat. morn^g. from thence to Buckingham where Mr. Hackett has a good many friends, because next Sat is Newport Fayre, & it would be inconvenient to have the Fayre & the pole together. Most are of opinion that this adjournment will lose my L^d Brackley 2 or 300 voyces, that cannot goe soe farre. Therefore my L^d Brackley was against it, but my L^d. Chief Justice like a Torrent carries all before him. Some say that if Mr. Hackett is worsted in these parts then my Lord will get the Sheriffs to adjourn it to Beconsfield, where my L^d Chief Justice has an Interest, being not farre from his House, but this is but a conjecture. Some things have happened here which are not fit to be put into a letter. . . . I have sent for my Coach & Horses to be here very early for I cannot goe soe farre as Newport, but I intend to go to Buck^m. on Saturday if the poll be adjourned thither.'

Lord Macaulay has related the sequel. how Tom Wharton's friends reached Newport, only to find every available lodging engaged, and provender for man and beast already bought up; 'the Whig freeholders were compelled to tie their horses to the hedges and to sleep under the open sky, in the meadows which surround the little town.' But Jeffreys had misjudged his men; Wharton was full of pluck and was ready to spend 1,500*l*. a day; the result of the first day's polling was that 'my Lord Brackley had 2,430 voices & odd, Mr. Wharton had 1,804 with many hundreds yet to poll & Mr. Hackett had 1,207 & noe more to poll'; and so the two first were declared at Newport to be duly elected, and Jeffreys' further schemes fell through. More even than against the triumphant Wharton, the Lord Chief Justice's rage was directed against the frail figure of the old man who spoke and wrote so temperately, but whose very presence at Aylesbury reminded the Bucks electors of the traditions of their best days. Sir Ralph's friends had only one regret, that he had missed the final triumph at Newport; but he failed not to hear of 'the greate griefe of my L^d. Ch Justice

who in his passion fell upon many of the gentry, but most upon me, tho' I was not there, I was a Trimmer & soe he would tell my Lord Keeper who was my friend '1. A few days later Wharton, the hero of the hour, won 'the four score pounds plate at Brackley races. T'was a gold tumbler, a fork & a handle for a knife. Sir Charles Shugborough & Mr. Griffith ran against him.'

Cary Gardner is jubilant, and only longs to encounter 'this demi-fiend, this hurricane of man,' as the ballad-makers called Jeffreys. 'I hear many accusations against you my Lord Chief Justice makes, but I bilove only whot I think, not pinning my faith to his girle, I pray God he may not use any ill courses to set you a side the election. I hate the world every day more & more, & find most falsehood in church, pretending to religion.' 'I wish I could come in company with that mighty man, that spi's his venham in every place at you,' she writes to her brother; 'I long to see him bot not out of love, bot fancy I could hit him more home then hee can you, & wot due & mildly too; hee deserves to bee told his erour tho' not afronted for his Master's sake, who I think hee dus great pretygys to instead of sarving; and fancy it will be thought so in time, ruling not becomming his grandeure. I would goe forty miles to meet him amouxt parsons of quollity, as for the Maior he is a pityfull fellow . . . old as I am I hope I shall see them both under other circumstances. I wish them better before death seizes them.'

Mun 'sate up all night in Buckingham drinking with the High Sheriff, Sir R. T. & Mr. Mayor' after the county victory, and Captain Pigott 'lay ill at Aylesbury after drinking too hard all through the election.' The Eure heiresses have rival candidates for their borough of Malden; Captain Fairfax is returned and not Mr. Wortley, by which it appears that 'Cousin Danby has got the victory over Cousin Palmes.'

Public attention was for the moment fixed upon the

¹ 'The surest way to propitiate the Lord Chief Justice was to treat the Lord Keeper with disrespect.'—Macaulay, *Hist. Eng.* i. p. 454.

April 23,
1685.

great preparations made for King James's coronation on St. George's Day. The Duke of Ormoud has arrived, 'many persons of Quality attended him into town, there were about 40 coaches.' 'His Maj^{ty} dined by invitation on board the Loyall James an East India Shipp, but the Entertainment was extremely mean & Bread & Cheese both wanting, as the report goeth.'

Penelope Osborne has ordered a new chariot on which her father's arms are to be painted, and her horses at Claydon are to be fetched up from grass and put 'in flesh' as fast as possible that they 'may be no discredit to the Coach.' She needs it urgently as she has a swelling on one foot 'as bigg as a Walnut.' Lame and withered as she is, she begs Sir Ralph specially to remember her 'Beauty Water' Penelope has crowds of callers, ladies of the highest fashion having suddenly remembered her existence, as she is 'known to have a good interest' with Henry's old friend 'the Earl of Peterborough, father in law to my Lord Marshall,' who has seats to assign for the coronation. Penelope is not nice in these matters, and enjoys the situation. Young Ralph and Edmund, with Denton Nicholas and a number of undergraduate friends are posting from Oxford to London, where the Verney lads are hospitably entertained by Aunt Gardner.

'I think if both the brothers come,' she writes, 'they must ly in my back rome, they will not be with us before 5 a'clock in the morning; my neveugh Ralph must bring his best cloths, none must bee ther in blak, that is forbid in print by my Lord Martiall. All the scafolds are lined & canopys over them to keep of rain, so all is very fine, all parsons visits the places of show to see the manner of it & many as will not be ther that day gos now. . . . My Cossin Georg Nicholas has been to see the preparations, & says tis not so fue as 100,000 people may stand to see it on the scaffolds in West^r Hall & the Pallis yard & in all the Church-yard of St. Margaret's at West^r & all the hustings along & many comes from beyound sea to see it, which you may guess the reson of.'

Your grandsons shall be with me,' she writes again to Sir Ralph, 'wher my Lady Anne Gunston & her daughters are, & Mrs. Bartley & Lady Tichborn & her daughters with more of my friends whom I am to conduct tomorrow to the place of standing wher we sit up all night, chusing it as the less disorder, because after 5 a clock on thursday morning no coach shall be suffered to pass Whithall & tis believed no coach shall pass after wensday night, & to avoid ill crouds we intend to sit up, & your grandsons shall have their sleep out before they goe. My Lady Warick saw the quens crown isterday, & ther is to the vallew of neer 200,000*l.* upon it, & shee will bee all over Jewels besids; never any quen was so richly decked, all conclude by many thousands, a world of Jewels shee borrows, a fair day is now chiefly wisht for. On Saturday the king was pleased to send to my Lord Pois to let him know he had the sword the pope sent King Hary the eight, and that he should have the honour to carry it beefore him on ister day, for the sord as was Carryed before the late king is layd Aside, Heare is nothing bot great & gloryous things publickly talked of, bot I doubt not bot ther is thousands as prays only for Immortall glory weh in god's good time grant to you & all yours & me & all mine weh shall conclud this from yr. affec. sister & sarvant Cary Gardiner. Sent this tuesday morning expecting a croud of people this day & tomorrow.' The weather was dry and unusually hot for April, propitious for a function. 'Tis said the King will walk to his Parliament thorow King St. in his Parliament Robes & that all the Peeres shall be the same with their coronets, purposely to gratifye his people that they may see a splendid show.' 'Profuse where he ought to have been frugal, and niggardly where he might pardonably have been profuse,'¹ the procession from the Tower was omitted by James on account of expense, while he lavished double the money on the Queen's trinkets. On Easter Sunday 'the rites of the Church of Rome were once more after an interval of 127 years performed at Westminster with regal splendour.' The streets swarmed with priests,

¹ Macaulay, *History of England*, i. 472.

while the Lord Mayor, who applied for the ancient right of representing the City as cupbearer at the coronation, 'was told by the Lord Keeper the claim was not good now the charter is forfeited.' The reception of the special Embassy from Holland was badly bungled. 'As they came up the River,' John writes, 'they lowered their flagg to the King's Castles, but put it up againe, on wch the then Gov^r fired 2 bullets one a head tother astern, but they not taking on't downe he fired soe again. Then the Embassadors (pretending whilst they are on board tis not usuall to take it quite downe) came on shoare and twas taken downe presently. . . . Van Sitters here joynd with the two Dutch Embassadors that came over, they are in great state, having each 6 Pages, 10 footmen & other Retinue answerable, & have taken a great house in St. James' Square but a publique entry is not granted them.'

'I am glad the Elections & Coronation is over,' murmurs old Betty Adams, 'ther was so much discors about them that one would thinck that thay forgot to tolck of aney thing els, but nothing can make me forget my soroes.'

Sir Ralph could not yet put elections aside, the borough had still to be won, and Jack Stewkeley writes of the 'foul play played Sir Ralph at Buck^m. by staving off the election and not allowing him to know the probable date of it.' 'All imaginable endeavours have been used to get over any one of his seven Voyces, but they are as firm to us as rocks,' Mun writes, 'but we know what tricks they may play us, & then there is no fence for a flaile but a Barne Door.' It soon appeared that a formidable plot was brewing; the mayor threatened to report one of the Whig aldermen, Dancer, a tanner, to the King for words against the Government; if Dancer could be summoned to London on however trumpery a charge, the election could be held in his absence and Sir Ralph would lose the seat. The only hope of defeating this trick was by making it public, and Sir Ralph, on behalf of himself, his colleague and his party, desired his son John to wait upon the Lord Chief Justice, to offer bail for Dancer's appearance as soon as the election should be

over, but to protest against any of the aldermen being forced to absent themselves before that day. Jack hears that 'Carter a tipstaffe has gone to Buck^m to bring up Dancer'; he has been talking over the matter with Ethersay the attorney. 'I find him a Rude, Passionate fellow, & Sir Richard tells me his brother the Mayor is ten times more passionate than he, I wonder how Sir Rich. who is boyling water & the Mayor doe, to set their horses together . . . hot-headed people that can't speak sense, hate to heare it.' 'Ethersay saith you called the town of Buckingham a nest of Bastards & Beggars—I told him I could not believe a man of your wisdom should speak such ill words . . . then he said you never spent 20 shillings in Buck^m. in 20 years—but I found he meant in Ale, & truly I doe believe it, but my Lady Gardiner told him that he knew you hated to goe to any alehouse. He stands much upon the honour of his family & saith 'twas formerly the best in that town, except Sir Richardson, I fancy his ancestors came out of Wales, & he retains still some Welsh hott blood in him.' Sir Ralph replies that the absurd stories of his being 'against Buck^m. are some 11 years, & the latest 6 yeares, old . . . tis true I have not spent 20 shillings in Ale (except on the occasion of this and my former election), nor shall I doe it if I live 20 yeares longer, but I am sure the men of Buck^m. have had several 20^s. of me for Work, & for things that I have bought of them. . . . I am noe way fond of this imployment, beleve me those that are out of the House are much happier then those that are in; & within few months you will bee of my mind I'll warrant you.' Cary hears that Sir Ralph's name has been brought up at the Council table, and that Sir R. Temple complains passionately that by his friendship with him he has lost the King's favour. The plot against Dancer goes on, and he and another alderman are to be turned out of the Commission of the Peace.

Sir Ralph and Sir Richard Temple desired John to get counsel's opinion about the Buckingham Charter, and to give a guinea or two for it. He went first to Henry Pollexfen, but that wise man would not meddle with the case, as soon as

May 5,
1685.

he had looked into it. 'In vain,' John says, 'I played with the gold in my fingers'; he protested that 'now Reason signifies nothing he will have nothing to do with such matters.' Pollexfen had shown considerable courage in defending the City Charter, he was afterwards the champion both of the Seven Bishops and of Baxter the Nonconformist, and was accounted 'a thorough-stitch enemy to the crown,' but he had reasons of his own for not meddling with an election in which Jeffreys was so much interested, and before the end of the summer he was employed by the Lord Chief Justice to conduct the prosecutions after Monmouth's rebellion.

Baffled here, John turned to another eminent man, John Holt, son of the Recorder of Abingdon, and educated in the Free School there, whom Sir Ralph must have known well; but he too was looking to Jeffreys for promotion. He listened coldly, and scratched his head, but was persuaded to read the papers '& said sure the man (Ethersay) was madd for an Alderman to talk soe, this he repeated 2 or 3 times,' but when pressed to say whether he would give an opinion, he doubted whether he had the time, remembered that 'it was the last day of Terme & that he must go visit the Judges.' John left the papers with him that he might consider them at leisure. But when he called again, Holt 'seemed rather more cold, & said he would not give anything under his hand or have to doe in the case.' John's labours were not yet over, some affidavits were required from the Lord Keeper's Office; 'I went 10 times for a copy of 'em, still could not have it, one Secretary had 'em not, another was gone out to Whitehall, I came againe & he was at a Taverne where at last I found him; they cost 6 shillings, that is 5^s to y^e Secretary & 1^s to the Porter.' Serjeant Leake, whom John caught at last, and persuaded to look into the case, was most discouraging. He said, ''twas nothing now to turn out men, many in a day, to disfranchise 'em, and then there's no remedy but by a writt of mandamus, which before that can restore them, the Election will be over & the turn served.'

Holt was soon after made Recorder of London; both he

and Pollexfen sat with Sir Ralph in the Convention Parliament, and became distinguished judges. But though even the Whig lawyers declined to help them, the Corporation of Buckingham proved less compliant than the Government expected, and refused to join 'in soe foule a practice aganist 2 of their brethien.'

The resistance to Sir Ralph suddenly collapsed; Sir John Busby seems to have been thrown over by his own party, and the defeated county candidate, Mr. Hackett, never appeared. Sir Ralph writes to John at the end of the long day, having got back to Claydon at ten o'clock. 'This morning Sir R. T. & myself were elected at Buck^m without any noyse or trouble. Mr. Atterbury was not there, nor did my Lord Latimer come down, so the whole 12 Electors signed the book for Sir R. T. & 7 signed for me, after which the Mayor sent for us upp into the Towne Hall, & declared the Election & sealed the Indenture or Returne with the Towne Seale & then all the 12 Electors put their hands to it, & delivered it to one to carry to the Sheriffs tomorrow morning. The Populace went to the Towne Hall & civilly demanded the Pole for my L^d Latimer & my Cozen Greenfield of Foscut, but the Mayor told them hee could not grant it, soe they went away & poled a little while & then seperated without noyse or tumult.'

May 15,
1685

When the same members had been returned for Buckingham in 1681, they were expected to give 'to each clerk that took the poll, being foure, a guinea,' 'to the men that got superscriptions for them, the like, being 3 or 4 & also to pay for drawing the intentions and the exposition all the day of the Election,' besides their agents' expenses 'in riding about & paying of messengers,' upon which Colman expressed his opinion that 'tis a great charge to be chosen a Parliament man.'

CHAPTER LIII.

THE OLD 'PARLIAMENT-MAN.'

1685.

May 21,
1685.

SIR RALPH has taken his seat again, and has forgotten his ailments in the interest of resuming his House of Commons work. He is sitting by Sir Charles Gawdy and other old friends, and goes down to Westminster so early that those who want to see him must call before 8 o'clock in the morning. He is lodging at 'Capt. Paulden's house, over against the Crosse Walke in Holborn Row in Lincoln's Inn feilds.' The Commons are agitated with questions of orthodoxy, they desire the King 'to put the Lawes in Execution against all dissenters from the Ch. of England whatsoever. . . . The House sits not this day being Holy Thursday, nor tomorrow being the 29th of May.'

May 26,
1685.

May 28,
1685.

'Will you be in London,' Sir William Petty, the generous optimist, writes to a friend, 'when the Parliament sits, & help to do such things for the common good that no King since the Conquest besides his present Majesty can so easily effect?'

John is chiefly anxious that his father should not be overtired; he has 'little stomach to his food.' 'I would not have you goe soe much on foot . . . walking in London differs much from doeing so in the Country open aire. In London the roughness of the treading, the rubbing by the people, & the bustle of 'em, wearies the body, & giddydes & dozeth the head; and if you must walke, why should you not goe in your Coach to Hampstead, Highgate or any other way & there alight & walke for such a convenient time as you shall judge fitt & soe home againe with some friend to hear you

company & talke to, but really, to walke about the streets I cannot think it wholesome for you at all.'

'Childe,' replies Sir Ralph, 'I thank you kindly for your care of my Health, but the bustle of a parliament will not suffer me to take the aire at such a distance, & especially at first when we are generally tyed to more constant attendance, either on the House or his Maj^{ties} person. I goe not on foote but when the weather is faire & coole, & then I doe well to favour my Horses & to save my Coach, which is more prejudiced by one day here, than it probably can in Tenn in the Country, the Stones being ready to shake it in pieces. . . . divers petitions against Elections were brought in—my cousin Palmes brought in one for Malton & my L^d Latimer & my Cousin Greenfield brought in another against Sir R. T. & mee for Buck^m,' and M^r Hackett petitioned against Mr. Wharton's return.

The laws which the House of Commons wanted to put in force against Papists were formidable weapons against Protestant dissenters of Whig proclivities. After Monmouth's rebellion 'Noncon: ministers' were more than ever persecuted; 'considerable numbers of them were actually in the late Rebellion, fit Chaplains indeed for such a Mushroom King & fit Spiritual Guides for such lewd Rebels.' Lord Abingdon is keen 'to ferret them out.' A distressed appeal reaches Sir Ralph from 'Samuel Clarke a Non: Con:' whose career might stand as an epitome of the changes which England had passed through in the life of one generation. A highly educated Cambridge man 'of great moderation,' he had lost his fellowship at Pembroke Hall by refusing to sign the engagement under the Long Parliament. During the Protectorate, he was presented to the rectory of Grendon Underwood by Squire Pigott of Doddershall, in succession to old Thomas Howe. He had the reputation of being an excellent preacher and a learned Biblical scholar; he was so much opposed to the high-handed action of the Church of England after the Restoration, that he and his two sons gave up their livings in 1662. Philip, Lord Wharton, protected him at Winchendon 'from the face of the spoiler.

June 25,
1685.

Persecution drove him further and further from Episcopacy, but he devoted his blameless old age to compiling a Bible Concordance and other works, he founded what in Puritan phrase was called 'a gathered Church' in his own house at Wycombe, and died suddenly while conducting the devotional exercises of his people in 1701. Being held by this time 'in much esteem,' the Church, so unkind a stepmother to Clarke in life, received him back in death, and he was buried in the chancel of the parish church at Wycombe.¹ But when he wrote to Sir Ralph in 1685, he had just been seized in the parish of his old patron at Doddershall. '3 Troopers of my L^d Brackly's Troop, brought a warrant signed by 6 Dep: Lieftenants,' Sir John Bushy being of the number, . . . 'to secure Mr. Kent [one of the obnoxious aldermen who had voted for Sir Ralph], Mr. Nit (who is Mr. Hampden's chaplain) & myself' They were detained at the Red Lion Inn at Aylesbury, and could find no magistrate to whom they could appeal to be tried or released. Clarke having been known to Sir Ralph a great while, and never having given cause for 'the least umbrage of suspition,' begs him to intercede for them with the Lord Lieutenant. 'Tis true our confinement is not strict & we are treated with all manner of civility by the officers here, yet not being conscious of having ever either don or spoken anything which may deserve so much, I doe humbly sue for a discharge.'

The magistrate and the dissenter found the rigour of their natural relations to each other much softened by the gardening tastes they had in common; it was not the first time that Sir Ralph had saved the Noncon. from the persecutions of the law, and the latter, while deploring Sir Ralph's prelati cal leanings, allowed that he was an accomplished grower of grapes. As David had accepted the protection of Achish, King of Gath, the elect in these evil days might do well to propitiate so kindly a Philistine, and accordingly some choice vines reached Claydon from Winchendon, that Mr. Clarke considered to be 'exactly season'd & suited to

¹ Gibbs' *Worthies of Bucks*, p. 103; Parker's *History of Wycombe*, p. 162

Sir Ralph's palate,' and which he begged him to accept from 'A real Honourer of your worth & your highly lowly servant.'

Sir Ralph's 'rarities' in his house and garden have more than a local reputation; he writes to John (in 1681)

'When your Brother & I were gon to Radcliffe about 12 o'clock, there came hether a very handsome young and gentile person, with a Gentleman and 3 more servants in livery, all extreemly well Horsed, & armed with Pistolls, & Carbines; & desired to see the House, the Church, Gardens, & Parke, & went all over the Roomies, & other places, and told my Bucks, & would goe to the Hay Ricks, to see how I had contrived it that the younger & weaker Deere might come in; & sayd hee knew mee very well, & spake of mee & my Election at Buckingham, very perticularly; but neither Hee nor any of his 4 servants would tell his name, nor discover who hee was, though they were severally asked, but hee still replied, "Doe not you know mee? Sure you doe." They Dranke a Bottle of sack, very civilly & went away, & noe body knowes either who hee was, or whence hee came, or wether hee went.'

John Verney and his wife, at Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells, met the impetuous Whartons again: 'Yesterday morning Aug. 16, Capt. Henry Wharton comeing to the Wells, bade a Coach-1685. man drive out of the way for the D. of Norfolk was comeing, but the coachman having broke some harness, said the D. of N. must waite if he came, or words to that effect, on which Harry W. Knockt him downe, then Dr. Jefferyes (Broth. to the L^d Ch. J.) lookt out of the Coach & askt the reason of the action; the Captaine bade him come out of the Coach, & he would serve him soe too: this hath angered his Lordshipp, but I presume (for the Duke's sake) tis husht up. Thom. Wharton is here. . . . This Place is very full of company, soe that lodgeings are very hard to be gotten & consequently deare, as are all provisions here. The Prince hath returned to the Court but the Princess is still here.

Sir Ralph replies from Claydon. 'The rashness of Capt. Aug. 28, 1685.

Harry Wharton brings him into more disputes & troubles then can bee expressed, as hee growes older I hope hee will bee every day more weary of such Brangline Broyles. On Thursday next is the race at Quainton Meadow then his brother Tom, & perhaps Harry Wharton too may probably be there.' 'Our country talk,' writes Mun a little later, 'is that my Lord Scaresdale, L^d Spencer, M^r. Tho : Wharton & his brother Harry went to Ethiop, & whipped the Earle of Carnarvan in his owne house & didd some other Peccadillios in his Castle besides. . . Capt. Bertie was sent for to reliefe the Castle & I hear he did come accordingly, but the Bravos were all gone first.

Sir Ralph's own life was saddened by the loss of a friendship that could never be replaced. 'Sir,' wrote John Stewkeley, 'the good Lady Gawdy is dead'

Their correspondence had continued till within a few days of her death: 'The honour you allow me of your friendship,' she writes, 'gives me this liberty thus to follow you into all places where you reside to make my acknowledgments of your favours, & to lay my thankes at your feete, I am hopelesse Sir, ever to sarve you, but to bee found in the traine of your obleged is A pleasur I will never mis by my neglect.'

Lady Gawdy had been very suffering and sleepless, but she wrote bravely asking her old friend's help, to wind up some money matters which concerned her younger children, that her eldest son and executor 'may have his sorrow & debts for me made as easy as I can to him.' . . . 'Your obleging letter makes my spirit diligent to pass out at all ports, to meete you with the most grateful reception.' Twenty years before Sir Ralph had said of her that she managed her affairs with 'temper, justice & moderation even beyond his expectation in all the wayes of kindnesse & friendship.' She now commended her children and grandchildren to his care, thanked him once more for his counsel and kindness during her thirty-five years of widowhood, and begged him to burn her letters, that 'no stranger eye may censure them hereafter'; she had burnt all his for this reason.

Sir Ralph evaded a promise, 'My Respects like Rivers pay tribute to the Ocean of your Favours,' he writes, but he was then in town, and the letters were in the country treasured as his most precious possessions. In their faithful and noble friendship there had been nothing to conceal: this was the only request of hers which he did not feel bound to grant; at least the letters are at Claydon still

'Lady Vere Gawdy was four days a dying,' in grievous pain, but mistress of herself to the end.

Sir Charles informs Sir Ralph that 'she left this world on Monday morning, & this poor family miserable in the want of her. . . . Upon my returne from London I found my Deare Mother so apparently mending for the first two days, as truly I thought I had ground for those hopes, which God knows the zeal of my soul formed into wishes for her recovery. Butt after that little intermission, the assaults of her diseases grew furious & such a contest between her payne & her cheerfulness, as I beleeve you scarce ever saw. Her patience & devotion are impressions upon me nothing can eradicate, her tenderness & care for every one, nay her abilitie, lasted as longe as her sences & they parted not from her till her life. She had in her muff, which shee always wore when out of her bed, a letter of yours & one of mine.'

July 21,
1685.

The spring of 1685 had been hot and dry; no rain fell at Claydon for many weeks; Sir Ralph's gardener, Henry Teem, was weary of watering; the strawberries were fading and the peas would hardly keep for his worship's return. Mistress Anne Woodward, one of the Denton sisters, who was accustomed to distil 'the Cordyall Water' for Sir Ralph that he would not willingly be without, mourns over her withered herbs 'which have little or no goodness in them,' and the 'rosemary which is quite gone out of our country, that will be much missed in the Water.'

In the sultry days of this parched June, the terrible tragedy of Monmouth's landing, his brief success and crushing defeat, was being enacted in the West of England. The home counties shared in the excitement; Betty Adams

writes that Baddow is full of soldiers, 'our malisha being all in arms.'

Parliament was suddenly prorogued in July, and Sir Ralph went down at once into the country. On revisiting Buckingham he was escorted back to Claydon with torches, and caught cold, as his family remarked with severity, because he would not suffer the glasses of his coach to be put up.

July 15,
1685

Mun, suffering and depressed, with gout in the eyes and a terribly ulcerated leg, remained behind in the doctor's hands: 'Mec thinks this place is very uncouth to me now you are gone out of it,' he writes to his father, '& my Heart feels a kind of Horror of it, for want of the usual & dayly enjoyment of your delightful Company, which it Loves beyound expression & ever will. . . . My eyes continue bad enough still, I have clapt a plaister of Bergamo Pitch on the Pole of my Neck, which I think hath done me some good tho' not much.' John writes the same day: 'Yesterday the late Duke of Monmouth, & the late Lord Gray & the German were brought Pinnioned Prisoners in 2 Coaches (by my Lord Lumley) to Fox Hall, thence by Lt. Dartmouth in Barges to Whitehall, & after some stay there in the Barges to the Tower.' The next letters are full of the horror of Monmouth's end, 'on the weeping Saint's day,' as Lady Gardiner says. 'After begging mercy of His Majesty in terms very abject,' he had roused himself on the fatal morning to meet death with dignity. On July 15, 'between 10 & 11 in the morning, he was executed on Tower Hill. On the Scaffold there were 4 divines, the Bps. of Ely, Bath & Wells, Dr. Tenison, & Dr. Hooper, he said little but answers, & did sometimes turn from them when they asked him Severall Quest^{ns}. one after another; but he dyed very resolutely, neither with Affectation nor dejectedness, but with a courageous moderation. The Executioner had 5 blowes at him, after the first he lookt up, & after the third he put his Leggs a Cross, & the Hangman flung away his Axe, but being chidd tooke it againe & gave him tother two strokes; and severed not his Head from his body till he cut it off

July 16,
1685

with his Knife. This Joseph told me,' Mun writes, '(who once served my Lady Gardiner), I mett him coming from Tower Hill, where he saw the Execution done.'

With advancing years, Sir Ralph finds town life more and more trying to him; 'Whether or noe you drink Asses' Milke you must expect to cough, when you come to London,' is Dr. Denton's cheerful comment upon one of his many colds. He complains that he cannot drink asses' milk at all in town, 'for the Dr^s (and peticulerly Dr Tower) tell there patients, that tis soe foul with sutt, smoke, & Dust, that it hath very little Vertue in it.' He returns to Claydon in the spring, and writes thence to John, who has exhorted him to keep 'within & warine.'

'Childe,—I prayse God wee came well home about Feb. 28,
5 a'clock on Friday, but my Coach was stuck in my coz. 1686.
Winwood's Lane (called Stirke Lane) that I was forced to bee drawne out with a Teeme . . . My Lord Wenman I heare is very ill, soe that he hath 2 Drs. with him from Oxford, therefore he must needes bee in greate danger. To humour you I have stayed within dores ever since I came home, only I was at Church this day, but have not yet been in my Parke, Gravell Walke, nor Elme Grove, yet this day I am growne Hoarse & finde noe abatement of my cough but I am sure that staying within Dore is very unusual to me, & much against my owne inclinations and indeed very Tiresome to Your affate father, R. V.' 'I could wish you would take sugar of roses with yr. asses milke,' Dr. Denton writes. Sir Ralph was apt to do a little doctoring of his own behind the good physician's back. 'In my Pocket,' he writes March 7,
to John, 'I found this Dirty Printed Paper, you know I love 1686.
a mountebanke therefore at your owne leasure buy me a Role of Extract of Licoris; 'tis but a shilling & lay up thes paper that if I send for more you may know where to find it.'

A few weeks later Dr. Denton writes: 'I am sensible of our neighbour Lord Wenman's dying, and would help all if I could, but we strive against an Act of Parlt. made in Heaven, & must submitt. My Lord Wenman, my old schoolfellow and friend, is 4 or 5 yeares younger then I,

May 1,
1686.

web gives me fresh occasion to bless God for my great share of health in my olde daies. I pray God I may make good use of it.' . . . 'My old Lord Wenman is dead,' Edmund writes, ' & now there is a great windfall at Twyford, come to Dr. Adams Rector of Lincoln Coll in Oxford, who I ghuesse will have the discretion to make the best of it.' Two hundred years later Lord Wenman's land figured in a Bucks Election, when the men of Twyford, desiring in their turn 'to make the best of it,' applied to Lincoln College to let it to them, it furnished a topic hotly discussed by the local politicians on both sides, and the Twyford Allotments case attained to a more than local notoriety.

CHAPTER LIV.

'AN OLD AGE OF CARDS.'

1684-1687.

WHILE Rachel Lady Russell wore with so much dignity a 'sorrow's crown of sorrow' to the end of her life, her friend Lady Gardiner, who lost her excellent husband a few months later, was in danger of sinking into 'an old age of cards.' Preshaw House had been bought by Sir Hugh Stewkeley, and John Stewkeley and his family settled in London, where his chief relaxation during his last years was playing at bowls, 'when he meets at least 40 every night of parsons of good quollity.' After his death in 1684, they moved into a smaller house. Cary 'wants the wherewithal to marry her girls,' they must live 'like nuns,' she says, '& my son as Jack-a-Fryar (not virtuous enofe I fear for the company of women)'; their small town-house seems dull and narrow after the cheerful home at Preshaw, and an evening 'abroad' means play. Sir Richard Temple's little daughter Maria is christened on his birthday in the drawing-room. The baby's mother, and the godmothers, Lady Chaworth and Lady Gardiner, are immersed in cards. They leave off gambling 'for 3 or 4 rounds' while the service is actually performed, then fall to it again, oblivious of everything around them. Not content with risking whatever her own poverty could scrape together, Lady Gardiner tries to launch the whole family in fashionable speculations, and to borrow money of her own girls. Sir Ralph supports them in the difficult virtue of resisting their mother, and acts as an outside conscience to Lady Gardiner, though she protests against

his absurd scruples She is deeply in debt, and asks him to lend her 100*l*.

'Deare Sister,' Sir Ralph replies, 'at the sight of your letter it is hard to say whether I was more troubled to read your condition, or to see you insensible that you are the cause of it. I doe not wonder that play (which has ruined soe many Families and soe vast Estates) has reduced you to soe great Extrenityts, as almost to see the destruction of Youres. You are in noe way qualified for a Gamester, but lie at the mercy of All that play with you. Having so small a Fortune you engage with others of great Estates, and will venture to play with them at a Game too High for you, though not for them! Pardon me Sister, I must needs tell you with a Brother's freedom, that you are now come to the Brincke of the precipice, and nothing cann save you but a timely Retreat . . . And to show you plainly that I doe not give you this Counsell to save my Money, I promise you the 100*l*. you desire, soe you will first send mee a full & faithful promise under your own hand, to leave off all Gameing and such continuall & extraordinary Visiting, & also to retrench your Household expenses. And if you refuse to gratify mee in this Request, you cannot expect I should comply with yours. For that would be but to furnish you for play, like an ill physician who instead of curing feedes the Disease.'

March 10,
1685.

Cary waxes fierce under the aggravation of such excellent advice. 'You are very seveal, and I cannot bot say unjust to Accus mee of Whot you due not know to bee truth, and of whot I can truly take my oath is false, and yr Informars divilish lyars that tell you I have bin such a luser at play. I know the originall of all the ill is said of mee, thay goe about the earth sekking to mischef me. . . . A Church farissy and an hypocrit may easily ruine any under my sircumstances, bot as low as I am, I scorn them and all thay can due to mee, & wod not goe ovar the thrash-old to satisfy yr Informars that has bin so long hatching this mischef. . . . Whot quollyfications A gainster should

have I am A strangare to, bot whot dus becom A gentil-woman as plays only for divartion I hope I know. For my high play I am sure when I play with thos as is of great quollyty, ther is fore of us joyu as one gung, wch is much loware to my shar than whot I usd to play at my cosseu Nicholasis, and I nevar played at My Lady Deavonshirs bot thre times, and then my Lady Seamore and my Lady met, and Mrs. Vernon went equall shars with me. . . . Tis true I play with my Lady Fits, bot wee often have sherars, tho I am so insincesible A creture yet I know did I find gameing had bin so prediditall I had long sine left it, and why you should injoin me to leve play quite I thunk is hard, and as hard as I should not visit, sartainly that cannot rung mee . . . and thank you for yr advise tho it extends to a high severty.'

'You letter,' replies her brother, 'was sharpe as a March 14, 1686. Dagger whetted for execution. . . . when my neighbour's house is on fire, I should thank him kindly that would tell me of it. Friendly cautions are Tokens of Love, whereas Silence in Danger is a Signe of Indifference.'

'The wholl Indeavour of my life sine my husband died,' March 17, 1686. she writes again, 'has bin to make my children's life comfortable, though things has not sockseeded to my mind, & am sure now sine this unspeakable troble of yr ill opinyon of mee, I have hyd it all from them tho I have lived in sorrow night and day, & had not the Implyment of my remove divarted mee I sopos I had bin as ill as my enymis wish mee.'

Cary cannot bear being called a gamester. 'I have March 24, 1686. known & so have you, very good women in yr Account, as playd at cards more in a yeare than I doe in seven, wch would have taken it ill to have that title given them.' Dr. Denton has been harping on the same string. 'Your sister Gardiner is both Rotterdam & Amsterdam,' he complains, 'for she doth nothing but scold at me, & swears I am ten times worse than your worship & then I must needs be a very pure youth!' 'Sartainly,' Cary goes on, 'I am not so

void of reson at this age bot that I can refran from duing myself and family any damag by play beyound A sum of 20*l*. or 30*l*. wch cannot ruing them.'

'Restrant from Evill,' her counsellor replies, 'is neither imprisonment nor confinement, as you call it, for to govern ourselves well is the truest Liberty. . . . if you doe not meane 20*l*. or 30*l* a year, or 20*l*. or 30*l* at a time, but only 20*l*. or 30*l*. in all & to leave off play for Altogether whenever that is lost, in such a case your solemn and faithful promise of it, shall end this dispute with your aff^{ate} brother and servant.'

Cary, however, finds it inconvenient to be bound by such definite promises to so precise a person. She carries the war into the enemy's country. 'Some barbarous people has raised so great a scandall on me, I pray God forgive them . . . tis just as the lady at court [Penelope Osborne] reports, that nether I nor my daughters are ever at homb, nay, had the confidenc to tell us so to our faces, when shee has mist us when we ware at Church. I dare say no young women in towne stay more at homb, nor work harder, nor take less pleasure a broad than thay due . . . shee ever was unhappy to me. . . . I hope brother for the futur you will not credit the reports ill people rase of mee.'

March 31,
1686.

Sir Ralph docketts this, 'Sister Gardiner's letter wherin she does not answer my last.' He feels that Right and Reason (with big Rs) are on his side, but Love is weary of the discussion, and he sends Cary the 100*l*. she asks for. Amicable relations being thus re-established between them, she continues her chatty chronicle and her unpleasant prescriptions. 'My lady Seymore told me the old Duck of Somerset wch was her lords brother was very Inclinaire to an apoplex above twenty years before he dyed, and did often Indanger his life, and after takeing many things of severall Physitians, was advised by a frend as had helped many of that complant, to ware oyld cloth at the bottoms of ther feet between ther socks and ther feet it might be next ther skin: and after my Lord wore this, hee never had any apaplexsical fit: so I have sent you down some in case you

ware it, tis held A drawing much from the head wch is imputed to prevent thes fits.'

Cary herself complains of shortness of breath, but is very energetic: 'I now rise at five A klok & after our six A klok prayers, I walk in our quodrangle or in the Covent Garden wher ther is a freshnes of Ayre, purer than in St. James' Park, besides I have A house as is very open backwards wch is comfortable to me. . . .' The house is in 'James Street wch we give £60 a year for, redy furnished . . . tis neer the Church wch is the cheif advantag of it.' Evelyn describes this 'new church at St James,' with its 'garlands about the walls by M^r Gibbons in wood,' and its richly adorned altar. Sir Ralph's contribution to Cary's furnishing is a rack for plates; 'My Cook-maid taks great delight in it, and so thay due all and therefore you have many thanks for it from them all and mine doibly for such a convenyent pece of household stof, for such neet things pleases me exstremely.' Cary writes after a visit to her brother: 'I have had a world of company with mee daly, bot not my lady Ann Grimston for Dec 16,
1687. M^{rs} Grimston was not marayed on monday morning but at night being A mode Anionxt the great ons and yesterday thay all dined at my Lord notingams. And for the honnor of y^e wellcome, I am told by all as sees mee, that I look better sinc I was with you, then I have don a great while so I conclud I should a groun fat, had I not had great troble to A lay the delight I took in being with you at sweet Claydon bot my joys has allways had great A lays w^h is very just I should have'; after the economies of the little house in St. James's to dine well was to Lady Gardiner a pleasure second only to winning at cards. John feels much for her. 'I am sorry to see that Lady that hath kept soe many Coach horses at once, and 20 servants, now live without a paire of the first, and onely a girle of the other, for she takes no serviant but frank Rogers' on a journey to Baddow.

Her son Jack (who has 'a gentile fancy' in dress and in his disinclination to work) has just won 'above £1800 at play'; his family rejoices, for he is said to be 'very fair as

a Gamester.' To the end of his life, Cary is appealing to Sir Ralph to get her out of scrapes, and in 1690 there are lawyer's letters which he has labelled as referring to 'My Lady Gardiner's Project with M^r Pimrose in the Royall Oake Lottery, wherein she plunged M^r Page, her son-in-law, & herself, and he cheated her of £600.'

CHAPTER LV.

AN OXFORD UNDERGRADUATE IN THE REIGN OF
JAMES II.¹

1685-1688.

‘ I DESIGNE you for the Universitie, if you are fit for it, for I ^{Nov. 20,} hope in God you will take to some honourable profession of ^{1684.} your own accord, if not I am resolved you shalbe of a meane one for of some Profession, High or Low, I will make you, for I abhor you should go sauntering up & down like an idle lazy Fellow, and see God blesse you ’

The boy thus admonished was Edmund Verney, second son of Edmund Verney and Mary (Abell) of East Claydon; he was sixteen, and a few months later his father entered ^{Jan. 1685.} him as a ‘ fellow-commoner ’ at Trinity College, Oxford.

Sir Ralph had been brought up at Magdalen Hall; but Sir Francis Verney, of the former generation, had been at Trinity, and several of the boy’s friends were already there. Philip Bertie, son of Robert Earl of Landsay, whose father had been Mr. Cordell’s pupil when Sir Ralph lived at Blois, was admitted in February 1683, aged eighteen. Denton Nicholas, Dr. Denton’s grandson, went to Trinity in 1681, aged sixteen, and was now about to take his degree. Ralph Palmer, only brother of Mrs. John Verney, had been there nearly a year. John Butterfield and Simon Aris, probably relatives of the present and former Rectors of Middle Claydon, were Trinity undergraduates about this time. Josias Howe, a famous royalist divine (son of Sir Ralph’s old neighbour,

¹ My thanks are due to the Rev. Herbert E. D. Blakiston, of Trinity College, for the trouble he has taken with his special knowledge to elucidate this correspondence.

Rector of Grendon Underwood for more than fifty years), was one of the lights of Trinity; he had been deprived of his fellowship by the Parliamentary Visitors in 1648, but it was restored to him at the Restoration, and he resided in the College till his death in 1701.

There was a great deal of bustle and excitement in getting the boy's outfit together. He noted with pride his 'new sylver hilted sword, his new striped Morning gown,' and his '6 new laced Bands whereof one is of Point de Loraine'¹

Stephen Penton, chaplain to the Earl of Aylesbury, has left us a quaint account of his parting with a son whom he took up to the University about the same time. Father, mother, and sisters accompanied the lad to Oxford, and received his tutor at an inn, where that learned person delivered a discourse to the family council, of so alarming a nature, on all that the undergraduate was and was not to do, that as soon as he left the room 'the boy clung about his mother and cry'd to go home again, and she had no more wit than to be of the same mind; she thought him too

¹ He is thus entered in the Trinity College Admission Register.

'Ego *Edmundus Verney* filius *Edmundi Verney* Armigeri de East Claydon in Com: Bucks: natus ibidem, Annorum circiter 16, Admissus sum Primi ordinis Commensalis Mense Januarii 168 $\frac{1}{2}$ sub tutamine magistri Sykes.'

And the following fees were paid:

Jan 23. 168 $\frac{1}{2}$

Received then of Mr. Edmund Verney. Ten pounds being Caution money laid into Trinity College, Oxon: I say, Received by me.	$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{£.} \quad \text{s.} \quad \text{d.} \\ 10 \quad 0 \quad 0 \end{array} \right\}$
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JOHN CUDWORTH BURS^R

Received also one pound ten shillings for utensils.

Item, for the New Building	£15
Item, for the Common room	£ 2

Jan: 23. 168 $\frac{1}{2}$

Received then of Mr. Edmund Verney the sum of one pound and eight shillings to be payed to the College servants for his admission into Trinity College Oxon: I say received by me.	$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{£.} \quad \text{s.} \quad \text{d.} \\ 1 \quad 8 \quad 0 \end{array} \right\}$
--	---

THO: SYKES.

weakly to undergo so much hardship as she foresaw was to be expected. My daughters (who instead of Catechism and Lady's Calling) had been used to read nothing but speeches in romances, hearing nothing of Love and Honour in all the talk, fell into downright scolding at him, call'd him the merest scholar and if this were your Oxford breeding, they had rather he should go to Constantinople to learn manners. But I who was older and unders'ood the language call'd them all great fools.'¹

Edmund was spared any such scene, as his father allowed him to go to Oxford alone. The last day had been occupied with packing and making lists (such was the orderly family usage) of the clothes, bed-linen, and table-linen with which his father supplied him. On January 21, 1685, he left home, and on the 22nd his father wrote him the first of a long series of affectionate letters in which he followed every detail of his son's college career.

'For Mr. Edmund Verney at his chamber in Trinity College in Oxford, or at Mr. Thomas Sykes his Tutor's Chamber in the same College. With a Box And a Trunk.

'Child, I shalbee very joyfull to Heare of yr safe London, Jan. 22, 1685.
Arrivall at Oxford, according to my kind Wishes wch. attended you all the Way for yr prosperous journey.

'I Have this Day sent you (By Thomas Moore ye Oxon Carryer) All yr things mentioned in this enclosed Note, except yr old Camelote Coate, wch. I Didd not think you would need nor worth sending; yr old Hatt I Didd not send neither, for it was soe Badd that I was ashamed of it. All yr new Things I Bought you I Put into a new Box Lockt up, and well Corded up, and the Key of this Box I Have also Here-enclosed for you: but for the Key of yr Trunk I could not find it, and its no matter, for that Lock is nothing worth: and Thom: made a shift to Lock it wth. a Key of myne: and it is well Corded besides: In yr. old Breeches wch. are in yr new Box, you will find yr five Laced-Bands (the sixt you Carried with you) and a new payre of Laced

¹ *Reminiscences of Oxford by Oxford Men.* By Lillian Quiller-Couch, p. 49 (Oxford Hist. Soc.).

Cuffes And yr two Guinnies in yr fobb, and a new Knife and forke in yr great Pocket. And so God Blesse you, and send you Well to Do I am yr Loving father Edmund Verney.'

'In yr trunk I have putt for you

18 Sevill Oranges

6 Malaga Lemons

3 pounds of Brown sugar

1 pound of white powdered sugar made up in quarters

1 lb of Brown sugar Candy

$\frac{1}{4}$ of a lb of white sugar candy

1 lb of pickt Raisons, good for a Cough

4 Nutmeggs.'

A week passed without any reply from the boy, and his father wrote again.

Jan 29,
1685

'Child,—When I take any Journey I always write unto my father By every opportunity a perfect Diurnall of my Voyage, and what else occurs worthy of Remarq: I writt to you a Letter this Day seven-night when I sent you yr Trunk and Box But never Hadd any answer nor account from you since: weh. is such a peccoe of Omission in you, to say no worse, that I Believe neither Oxford nor Cambridge can Paralell. For why I should Bee thus Neglected By my sonne I cannot imagine: indeed I looke upon it as an ill Omen, that you should committ such a grosse solecisme at yr first Entrance into the University against yr Loving father Edmund Verney.' Letters from Oxford to London are from three to five days on the road, and one from young Edmund had miscarried.

The answer when it came showed all a freshman's nervous anxiety to do the correct thing. The outfit which had looked so handsome at home seems inadequate and rustic now, and in his self-conscious shyness young Edmund imagines that all Oxford is laughing at him.

Oxon.
Feb 2,
1685.

'Most Honoured Father,—I want a Hatt, and a payre of Fringed Gloves very much, and I Desire you to send me them if you can possibly before Sunday next, for as I Come from Church Every body Gazeth upon me and asketh who I

am. 'This I was Told by a friend of Myne, who was asked by Two or Three who I was '

'Child, . . . I find you Have Payd the Taylor for making yr Gowne and Cappe: But that you cannot Bee Matriculated these 3 weekes yet, untill you are Better skilled in the Orders or Statutes of yr College or University: therefore I Pray Learne them as soone as you Can. I will send you yr Bible wth yr Hatt &c: And so I Conclude Beseeching Almighty God to Have you in his Keeping'

London,
Feb 11,
1685.

'Most Honoured Father,—I find by your letter that you could not bye me any Fingred Gloves, untill you knew what is generally worn in the university by reason of the Death of our most excellent King Charles the Secound. I cannot fully certifie as yet in this matter, But there are two or three fellow Commoners of our House of whom Mr. Palmer is one, that have bought their Black Cloathes, and Plain Muzeline Bands, and Cloath Shooes, and are now in very strict mourning: and others are Preparing for it, so that within this weeke I suppose the greater Part, if not all, of the university will be in mourning.'

Feb. 16,
1685.

'Child,—Last Tusday night about 11 or 12 a Clock, yrs. of the 16th came to my Hands. I Have now sent you a new black Beaver with a Rubber and yr Handkercher in the Crowne of it, all within a pastboard Hatcase: I Have Bought you a new Sylver seale, but it is not yet Engraved wth yr Coate, so I could not send it you this Bout, but it is a Doing, you suppose That within a weeke, the Greater part of the University if not all, will be in mourning: But I Ghuesse you are in a mistake, for I met with Dr. Say the Provost of Oriall, and askt Him about it, and Hee answered mee that There would Bee noe such thing as to the Generallity, Here & There some particular Persons might goe into mourning, and That would Bee all, for one swallow or two or 3 makes no Summer. Since I writt This, yr sylver Seale is Come soe I Have put it within yr Handkercher tyed up in great Hast.'

Feb. 19,
1685.

The boy writes later that mourning is worn only by families connected with the Court.

June 1685

'Child, I Heare my Cosen Denton Nicholas is come to Towne. Home to his ffather and Mother You say Hee Hath bespoke a new Table and Cane chayres, wch. will amount to 3^l a peece between you, But I Do not understand why you should Bee at that unnecessary Charge, as long as you Have that wch. will serve yr turne, neither Do I like the Vanity. You do not tell me whether you are matriculated yet or noe, and I am impatient till I know Thats done You say you want money, wch. I will supply you with very shortly, but not to Lay out in Vaine moveables, and so God Blesses you.'

'Why, what's a moveable?' we are tempted to ask with Petruchio. 'A joint stool,' Kate replies; Denton Nicholas and his cousin were intent upon a little more comfort than this, though they were far from having 'three elegant and well-furnished rooms' such as Gibbon occupied at Magdalen seventy years later.

Edmund had come to Oxford in stirring times; Town and Gown were alike excited about Monmouth's rebellion; the Lord Lieutenant and other gentlemen of the county were calling out the trained bands, and we hear of the Dean of Christ Church haranguing the students and using all endeavours to make them fight for the Crown. A bill of Mun's, 'for ye mending of my Sword,' suggests the exercises most in favour with undergraduates; small bodies of volunteers are enrolled at each college, and Wilding, an enthusiastic lad at St. Mary's Hall, pays threepence for Monmouth's speech¹ It was a disappointment to many ardent spirits that the fighting was so soon over; but the men consoled themselves with bonfires in the quads, a review on Port Meadow, and uproarious drinking of toasts.

That hot summer was a sickly time in Oxford, and Mun was ill with a feverish rash very prevalent there. In July he wants 'money To Pay for my Battles for Last quarter, which Comes To £06-00-09 and to pay my Tutor's Quarterage, and some other odd Businesses.' Mun goes

¹ *Account Book of an Oxford Undergraduate*, ed. by E. J. Duff.

home, but the vacation is not apparently to last much more than a fortnight.

'Child,—I Have now sent my Man Nedd for you, Dont you make Him stay to long : I would Have ffetcht you my selfe, But that I am Hindered By an Erysipulus, wch. Troubles me so, that I cannot Ride so farr at present. . . . I make Account you shall Returne to Oxford Time enough to Bee There against ye Terme, wch. I suppose is a little after Michaelmasse for you shall never miss a Terme while you stay in Oxon if I can Helpe it, Therefore Bee sure you Bring mee word Exactly, when the Terme Begins There.'

Sept 16,
1685.

Mun found the serenity of the domestic circle at East Claydon somewhat disturbed. His brother Ralph was desirous to marry 'so he might be free like other men,' and had asked his great-aunt, Lady Gardiner, to introduce him to some of her friends. She entered into his wishes with hearty good will, and felt no difficulty about arranging a match for him, if his father would give him an allowance. Edmund was 'under ye hands of an old Oliverian chirurgeon one Mr. Triapham . . . an able man & of great experience.' He was tortured by the caustic applied to his leg, beset with debts and difficulties of all kinds, and with the complications which his wife's madness entailed; he looked forward to clearing off his obligations when he should inherit Claydon, and thought that a boy of nineteen might wait a few years.

Sir Ralph, though fond of his namesake, and deeply interested in the question of his making a suitable marriage, considered that his son had a sufficient income, and did not offer to make any provision for young Ralph. Lady Gardiner complained bitterly that the father would 'part from nothing that can give Incouragement to wit with persons of quollyty,' but to keep her promise to the lad, she writes to his grandfather about a little heiress 'which I fancy you may make yr one terms with—shee is about 19 or 20 years of age, full out as handsome as my cossin Denton's wife of Hilsdon & as gentill, & of a much better birth, inclinable to bee fat, sings pretlyly. Her father will give her 3000 in present, & settell on her as much land

as cost him 4,000^l w^h he has improved & is very improvable, & a pretty house on it. This after his death w^h is 67 years of age & tis said he has 3000 more in mony w^{ch} he reserves to himselfe. Hee has a second wife an old woman as is very cross, shce is 72 years of age, something he is to leve her for life in mony I am told. Hee was a York sher gentelman, his name is Key a youngare brother. . . . I saw the young lady, w^{ch} is hansome enough to be wife to any man . . . ther is no treting with great persons for him, but I dare say this may be had. Littell things will serve her being low bred, I fancy they will lip [leap] at it, & in the end twill be good.'

Fresh difficulties seem to have arisen, and Aunt Gardner can only beg Sir Ralph to do all in his power 'to lesson the misfortune of your young son, who I feare must not marry, nether to high nor low, young nor old, rich nor poore, I hope you did not mention mee : w^{ch} I ometed to desiare you not to due ; I know the fortune is not great, and I trest in God my nevegh Ralphs estate will be kept from him many yeares by you and his father, I could fill twic this paper with arguments on the sons side, but am unwilling, sine they must reflect on him I love better than his son.'

Edmund was an autocrat with his sons, as his father had been before him. 'I heare you hate learning & your mind hankers after travelling,' he writes to Ralph when the boy wishes to have a voice in his own plans ; 'I will not bee taught by my Cradle how to Breede it up 'tis Insolence & Impudence in any Child to presume so much as to offer it.' No doubt Ralph poured out his grievances to his brother, but their father was too good-natured a man for the boys to be long *en froid* with him.

John Verney with his wife and children were at Claydon, and paid the lads a visit at Oxford after their return, which Ralph Palmer acknowledges in a grateful letter to his sister. Edmund desires to spend Christmas in town with his grandfather, father, and brother. 'With All my Heart,' Edmund senior replies, 'for you shalbee most welcome to mee.

Bring along wth you (I do not meane in the Coach But)
By the Canyer yr Best Waring Things, To make as good
an appearance Here as you can. You shall Lye in my
Chamber.'

Young Edmund is back again at Trinity College in the
beginning of January 1686. 'I have payd all my debts
besides my Booksellers, to whom I owed 2^s 9^s 6^d. and out
of the whole 18^s 4^s 6^d, ther is but 2^s 1^s 0^d remaining,
Therefore before I Can Pay my Bookseller, I must heare
from you again.'

'Child,—I would Have answered yr ffirst Letter sooner, ^{Feb 6,}
But that yr Brother fell sick last Tusday and continues ^{1686,}
very ill still of this Towne ffavor, I am glad you are out of
it, my uncle Dr. Denton is his Physitian, and Mr. St Amant
is his Apothecary He Remembers his Love to you; . . . I
would Have you Pay yr Bookseller, and gett Him to Abate
what you Can, And then all you owe in Oxford is Payd and
Cleered. . . . I Am soe perplexed about y^r Brother, that I
can write no more'

'My dearly beloved son Ralph departed this transitory ^{Feb. 11,}
Life yesterday morning about 11 a Clock. . . . my Heart is ^{1686.}
so incurably pierced with grief for the loss of my dear child
that I can no more be comforted then Rachel was who wept
for her children. . . . My poor son is this day to be put up
into 3 coffins, 2 of wood & 1 of lead & is to be drawn to his
dormitory in my father's vault in Middle Claydon, I shall
not stir out of doors till he is gone. He is to be drawn in a
Herse with 6 Horses & scutcheons & one Coach more with
6 Horses accompanies him, my brother & Jack Stewkeley goe
down in it as chief Mourners, & 4 men in mourning ride by
on horseback along with the body all the way.' Edmund
was too ill himself to go down to Claydon for the funeral.

'Child,—You and yr sister are now my only Relicts of ^{Feb 16,}
my Deare Wife yr Mother My Deare Sonne Ralph yr ^{1686.}
Brother Lived Virtuously and Dyed Penitently : soe
I Do Verily Believe That he is a glorious Saint in Heaven.
Now upon this sadd Occasion, I who Am yr true Loving
ffather Do Take upon mee to Advise, Councell, and exhort

you, to Bee wholly Ruled and Guided By me, and to Bee perfectly obedient to mee in all Things, according to yr Bounden Deuty, and Likewise to Behave yr selfe alwayes Respectfully towards mee and towards yr Mother. and to Honor us, That thy Dayes may Bee Long in the Land, wch the Lord thy God Giveth Thee : ffor should you Doe otherwise and contrary in ye Least, unto this my Advice, Injunction, and Exhortation to you, I am affrayed That you wilbee in that evill circumstance Snatcht away By Death in your youth, as yr poore Brother was last weeke : Thorefore O Thou my Sonne and Name Sake, Hearken unto my Voyce, who Doe Give Thee my Blessing : and who Am Thy most affectionate ffather and Best ffriend Edmund Verney.'

'I have Drawne affresh Bill Here enclosed upon Alderman Towneshend for 5*l.*, to Buy you a black Cloth sute. And I Have a new black Beaver Hatt for you, wch. I will send you next Thursday in a little deale Box, with a black Grape Hathand, Black mourning Gloves, and Stockings and shoe Buckles, and 3 Payres of black Buttons for wrist and neck And I Have also sent you a new ffrench cordebeck Hatt to save yr Beaver, the Box is to Keepe yr Beaver in : no Body useth Hateases now.'

Feb. 23,
1686.

'Most Honoured Father,—I Received Both yrs. that of the 16th and that of 18th, and by the former I understand, that it was the pleasure of Almighty God to take unto himselfe the soule of my dearest and only Brother, But I hope the Thoughts of the happyness, which he enjoyes in Heaven, will in a great measure lessen the sorrow, which I undergo by loosing so near and so dear a Relation. Now seeing it has pleased Almighty God to make me acquainted with the sorrows and Afflictions of this world, by taking from me my only Brother, I hope it will be a means to make me fear God, and Honour you and my Mother, and by so doing I hope I shall render both you and my selfe Happy. I Have made me a new Black cloth suit, and a new black morning Gown, which with new muzeline Bands and Cloth shooes will stand me in very near ten pounds. . . .

'I present my Duty to you and my Grandfather and my

love to my Dear Sister, and so I subscribe mysef Yr most dutyfull Sonn Edmund Verney'

The next letter is from Ralph Palmer to Mrs. John Verney about his own private sorrows. 'Dear Sister,—I hope all yours are well and free from losses, which I am not, for my horse is dead. Ye circumstances you will hear from my Father see that my saddle is useless. Mr. Mun Bears ye loss of his Brother, better than I do ye death of my horse'

'Child,' Edmund writes from East Claydon, 'I made account to Bee with you before now, But my first weeke in ye Country was Taken up at Alesbury Assizes, and the 2nd Resting mysef at Home and now in the Third, I have a cold and a so'e Throat, so that I Dane not Venture see fiarr yet, Being the weather is so very Cold wett and Boysterous. Therefore I Have sent my Man Nedd with this Letter, and five pounds for you to Pay off yr scores When the Weather comes in warner, I will goe over to Oxford. In the meane while if you Have a great Desire to Bee Here this Easter, and that yr Tutor Mr Sykes approve of it, not Elce, and That other Gentlemen Go see their friends generally about this Time, and that it is not Terme Time with you, Then if you write mee word of yr Desire, I will send for you next Wednesday, and so you may Prepare yr selfe accordingly . . . 'I have sent a lb of Chocolate to my Cosen Denton Nicholas, wch came from his mother for Him, And so my service to Him and to Mr. Palmer.'

Edmund being now heir to Claydon, and to his mother's property, became more than ever an object of solicitude to his father and grandfather. The children inherited a delicate constitution from their mother; and any ailment or tendency to low spirits naturally caused their father the gravest anxiety: no expence was to be spared when Edmund's health was concerned, but he was not to incur any unnecessary outlay in dress or in the furnishing of his rooms.

'Child,—There Bee many scurry ffeavers Here in Towne, London, So that I Do not Hold it fitt that you should Bee Here at this ffeaverish hott Time of ye yeare by noe meanes. My

March 6,
1686

Palm
Sunday,
March 23,
1686.

May 15,
1686

Cosen Nicholas Comming to this Towne is no Rule to mee, for Hee is Both Pox and ffeaver Proofoe wch you are not Pray Lett me Desire you not to goe into the water till I give you Leave, for ffeare of catching Haime. Present my service to Sr. William Dormer, And as to yr Versifying Dialogue with Him, I Take it very well, if you make it yr selves not elce, But as to That wee shall Talke more of, I Hope, if I live to meete you. You Hadd Best Bee very wary of all yr words and Actions: It is sayd Here you are Growne very melancholy, when I was Told it, I made Them a smart answer on yr Behalfe: So that if you Bee serious, sober and Discreet, Thats Interpreted melancholy to yr disadvantage, But should you Bee indeed to Blame in any Thing, then yr Back ffrinds would sett you out to some Purpose, Therefore Cave mi fili, Dimidium verbi Sapienti Sat Est et Spero Te Talem Esse et futurum Vale.'

To the charge of being melancholy the lad replies, 'I was never inclined that way in my life any further than to be somewhat concerned at my own misfortunes, and besides you may assure yr selfe, that my tutor or the president Doctor Bathurst, if there Hadd been any such thing in the least, would have been so Just Both to you and me as to have presently informed you of it.' His friend, Sir William Dormer, of Lee Grange, had just been admitted to Trinity in the April of this year, 1686, aged sixteen, and he and Edmund were ambitious of distinguishing themselves.

June 6,
1686.

'Most Honoured Father,—I hope when my Grandfather is perfectly recovered, you will consider of chiefest Business now in hand, and that is my speaking Verses in the Theatre next Act: which as we here esteem it, is one of the noblest and most Honourable things a gentleman can doe, while he stayes in the university. Therefore seeing the time now drawes near, I desire you would Bye me a good new periwigg, and send me as much as will bye a new Sute of Black Clothes, and the rest of the charges and fees will not amount to above ten pounds at most.'

June 15,
1686

'Child,—I would have answered yours with my own

hand, but that it shakes much by Reason of sickness that seized upon me last weeke. I refused to be lett Blood because its observed that those that are lett Blood here of pestilentiall Fevers, seldom or never are Knowne to escape. My Cousin Alexander Denton the Lawyer dyed here last weeke of this Feaver, having beene lett Blood to a considerable quantity, and was gone in 3 dayes. Pray be carefull of your selfe for fevers are very frequent and Dangerous, but when they doe happen the spiits must be kept up with Cordials, I do not mean Strong waters, And I hear Oxford is sickly And therefore you should have sent more word of it, and that Sr Wilham Dormer was gone home to Lee, and was sick of a Feaver, For which Reason I cannot believe he will be able to repeat his verses in the Theatre with you. As to your periwig I gave Order for one and the party forgot it, but I will be sure to buy one for you and send it downe to you in good time. And now I must Conclude in exceeding great payne with my leg, yr most affectionate father.

'My Deare Have a Care of yr Health I pray.'

'Child,—I receaved yours, and have taken all the care In the miserable Condition that I am in, as I can of what you wrote to me about. I Keep my bed, and am in continuall pain with my Legg. I am under one Mr. Hobbs a Chirurgeons hands soe that Doctors, Apothecaries and Surgeons are my chief in converse. Your Grandfather went home last Thursday finely recovered, God be thanked. I have appointed Nedd to goe to Oxford and carry you Money, Stockings and Handkerchiefs. A Periwig I will certainly send you, I hear 'tis allmost made. I am not in a Condition to buy anything else here or mind anything. My Cousin Nicholas had a letter from her son, he told her the Small Pox was very reef in Oxford, and particularly in your Colledge, of which I wonder that you take noe notice. If this be soe I would have you leave Oxford and goe keep your Grandfather Company at Midd: Claydon, as soon as I heare from you on this Subject, I'll order Horses to fetch you away. I would have you preferr your wellfare and

London,
June 21,
1686.

health before the honour of speaking in the Theatre, and soe God bless you and be carefull of your self.'

The next letter was written in bed with evident pain and difficulty, Edmund having no one but 'the Cooke-maid Dorothy' who had 'just now come' from East Claydon to nurse him.

June 24,
1686

'Child,—I pray when you speak in the Theatre doe not speak like a mouse in a chees for that will be a great shame instead of an honour, but speak out your words holdly and distinctly and with a grave confidence, and be sure to articulate your words out of yr mouth soe that every body may heare them playnly.'

July 6,
1686

'Child,—I heard that the players are gon down to Oxford, but I am unwilling that you should go to see them act, for fear on your coming out of the hot play house into the cold ayer, you should catch harm, for as I did once coming out of the Theatre at a publick Act when it was very full and stiaminghot, and walkin a Broad in the cold, and gave me sutch a cold that it had Lukt to a cost me my Life Your best way in Sutch a cold is to go hom to your one Chamber directly from the play house, and drink a glass of Sack, thetrefour Be sure you send your Servant At your hand for a bottle of the Best Canary and Keep it in your chamber for that purpose. Be sure you drink no Kooleing tankord nor no Cooling drinks what so ever . . . harkon Thou unto the voyce & Advise of mee Thy ffather, Loving Thee Better then him selfe.'

It is hard to imagine undergraduate Oxford without cricket or boating, but this allusion to the players is one of the few references to amusements that we have in the correspondence. In Wilding's account-book are the entries 'Michaelmas Term, spent in coursing 1s. 8d., and in the Winter Term At ye Musick night 2s. 6d.'; it was also open to the curious in 1686, to pay 2d. 'For seing ye Rhinoceros,' as Wilding did, and to view 'the rarities in the Physick School, the skin of a jackall, a rarely coloured jacatoo or prodigious large parrot and 2 humming birds, not much bigger than our humble bee.'

There was 'swimming in Merton Pool & Scholars' Pool, some tumbling in the hay, leaping, wrestling, playing at quoits and fishing.' Laud had put an end to the popular exercise at Oxford of learning 'to ride the great horse,' as he found in the riding school 'where one scholar learns, 20 or 40 look on & there lose their time,' so that the place was fuller of scholars than either schools or library; nor would he 'suffer scholars to fall into the old humour of going up & down in boots & spurs with the ready excuse that they were going to the riding house.' But neither Archbishop nor Puritan reformer could keep English lads and their horses long apart, and many a 'fine padd' was kept 'for health's sake' at one of the 370 Oxford ale-houses; and the more zealous tutors complained of the time spent by the scholar, who must needs go once every day to see that his horse eats his oats, and 'the horse growing resty if he be not used often, he must have leave to ride to Abingdon once every week, to look out of the tavern window & see the maids sell turnips.' The same authorities viewed with displeasure the bowling-green and the racket court, as they were public places resorted to by 'promiscuous company,' and such violent games tended, it was said, 'to fire the blood by a fever.'

The Verneys, who were not much of theatre-goers, had always taken dancing seriously, as part of the training of a gentleman. Sir Roger once entreated Sir Ralph's good counsel for his son Jack, lest in following this art he should 'make choice of some pedantic master, which will doe him more hurt than good, most of the dancing-masters teach them such affected gates and carriage as is conceited and ridiculous. Advise him to the Best, though he payes 3 times as much for it.' 'The best' were indeed so well-paid at Oxford that 'an honest tutor sold his hours cheaper than the fencer or dancing-master,' and it was a common complaint of sober people that 'Taylors, Dancing-Masters & such trifling fellows arrive to that Riches & pride as to ride in their Coaches, keep their Summer Houses & to be served in Plate, etc. etc. an insolence insupportable in other well-governed Nations.'

There were dancing and vaulting schools at Oxford, but fencing was probably the form of exercise viewed with least disfavour by the learned, and Mun pursued it with ardour. His hopes of distinction as a reciter were doomed to disappointment.

July 23,
1686.

'Most Honoured Father,—Our Act was put off this year by reason of the death of the Bishop [Fell], which hindered us of speaking verses in the Theatre, But the Priveleages and charges are the same now as if we had spoke our verses, Though I think we have quite lost the Honour of it.

'I have bought me a new sute of mourning and by reason of the excessive heat of the summer I was forced to Buy a new crape gown, which will stand me in '02 10^s 00^d, but I have not yet payed for my gown. I want new shirts very much.'

London,
Sept. 14,
1686.

'Child,—I Received a Letter lately from Mr. Sykes yr Tutor, unto whom you are very much obliged. Take my word for it, Albeit Hee makes a complaint of you, for not frequenting a certain afternoone Lecture as you were wont to Doe, yet otherwise Hee Speakes very Hansomly of you, wch Rejoyces my Heart, ffor I Take Him to Bee a plaine Dealer, and an Honest Gentleman, and I Hope you will Deserve those many good commendations Hee Hath Given me of you.

'It seems you Tell Him, That you Have particular Reasons, That you cannot Discover, why you come not to those Lectures. This may possibly Bee, as to Him and others, But as to mee who am yr ffather, There can Bee None, Therefore Pray Lett me Know By the next Post, those particular Reasons, And if I Like Them, I will Doe what I can with civility to Gett you excused: For Looke you Child, any one may Pretend particular Reasons, which one cannot discover, for not Doing what one ought to Do, or for doing what one ought not to Doe: But That Shamme will not Passe among Wise Men: ffor such Pretences to Avoyd ones Deuty, are allwayes (wth Justice) Interpreted in ill sence, and I should Bee very sorry any such Reflections should fall upon you: you are under Government, as all subjects are in

severall Kinds, and therefore are Bound By Laws and Rules and Precepts Divine to obey Besides it is a wrong to the Society not to Come to Lectures, ffor if all others should ffor-beare Comming to them as you Doe, the Lectures must ffall, wch are a support to a College, and so By Degrecs Arts and Sciences, and Learned Societies must Dwindle away and Dissolve to nothing. But I Hope none of my Posterity will ever Bee the primum mobile of such a mischief to Learning. And so I shall close up my Discourse about this Businesse for this time and Longing for yr Auswer about it.'

Meanwhile young Edmund had got into a more serious scrape at Oxford, and was in danger of being sent down; but the following letter from his tutor was accidentally delayed for more than three months, and before it reached his father at East Claydon the undergraduates were all scattered by an alarming outbreak of small-pox, and the letter had 'through length of time grown obsolete'

'Sir,—Since my last there are arisen new troubles, not about the Lecture mentioned in my former Letter, for I suppose that is at an end according to your Letter to me, But about other matters. It so happened that Mr. Verney Lay out of the College on Wednesday night Last with another or two of our College, and that with some other Provocations hath occasioned Mr. Vicepresident to Cross his name with the others. I suppose he will give you an Account where he was, he is unwilling to do it here, and that makes the business So much the worse. I suppose he will scarce ask for his name againe, and I presume the Vicepresident will not give it him of his owne accord, and so what will be the issue of it I Know not. He speaks of removing of himself to some other College, but I much question whether that will be for his advantage or not. If he is unwilling to stay here perhaps Sir its better to remove him from the university but I leave it to you Sir to judg what is best to be done; I cannot help this and I hope he will not deny but that I have behaved myself to him in all things as a tutor ought to do, and been civil to him as far as I could, but as to this business I can only be sorry for this, but cannot remedy it. It is directly

Oct. 1,
1686.

against both the discipline of our College and ye University in General to Ly out a nights, And I finde I cannot prevail with the Vicepresident to take off the Cross unless your Sonn will acknowledg his fault and promise not to be faulty any more in that Kinde.

'I humbly beg pardon for this trouble and give you my most hearty thanks for all your kindness to Hon^{al} Sir, your most humble and obliged Servant Tho : Sykes.'

Nov. 8,
1686.

Mun goes down with the rest of the undergraduates. 'Deare Brother,' Edmund writes to John, 'My sonne & I, & Grosvenor, & M^r Butterfield and Dover, Have all Read yr Booke of the Seige of Buda,' soe I Have sent it Back to you, wth my Thankes, and a Cheese, w^{ch} I hope will prove Good, if a Mouse's judgement may Bee Credited, you will find it soe. I Heare the small Pox Rages mightily in Trinity College in Oxon, as the Great one doth in London, so that Eight went out lately sick of them from that College, w^{ch} makes me afrayed to send my sonne Thither till albee well again. Sir William Dormer is kept still at Lee upon the same account.' Two more fellow commoners of Trinity, 'Mr. Chambers and one Mr. Knopher,' have fallen sick. The small-pox had done young Mun at any rate a good turn, his indiscretions were forgotten, while the authorities were gathering together their scattered and diminished flocks, and he never got into trouble again.

Dec 16.
1686.

'Sir,' writes Dr. Sykes to Edmund Verney, 'The small pox were in Oxford before your Sonn Left this place, and since that time we have had Several Sick of that disease, but at present we are all well in our College, but there are some still sick of other Colleges: Since the beginning of May last we have had (if I reckon right) sixteen or seventeen that have had this distemper in our College, and every one of them did well, and very few have miscarryd in the whole University, but however there is a danger in the

¹ Another favourite book of Edmund's, *The Voyage of Italy*, 1670, written by a fellow traveller of his in 1652, 'Mr. Richard Lassels, a Preist,' who 'went then by ye name of Richard Bowles,' has been restored to Claydon by the kindness of the Rev. W. G. Scott Hall, January 1904.

Disease, and its very chargable being sick here, and that was the reason why I have not desud your Sonn's Company sooner. I hope the disease is now going off . . . and the sooner your Sonn Returnes to me the more welcome he will be.'

Discipline for some years was very lax, as Aunt Isham complained when her son was at Metton twenty years earlier 'I heate as Tome will drinke more then his share . . . ^{Oct 16, 1666.} he hath an ingenus tuter & if I give him an hinte of itt he will brake him of itt, but that Coligo he was put in for beinge one of the sivelest itt is far from that, for all hours of the nite one maye goe out as Tome did tell me, for the felowes be out so much a nites as the gates be most an end open' The extravagant joy felt at the Restoration had nowhere been more loudly expressed than in loyal Oxford. 'They were not only like them that dream,' writes an Oxford man, 'but like them who are out of their wits, mad, stark, staring mad. To study was fanaticism, to be moderate was downright rebellion, and thus it continued for a twelvemonth; and thus it would have continued if it had not pleased God to raise up some Vice-Chancellours who stemmed the torrent, and in defiance of the loyal zeal of the learned, the drunken zeal of dunces, and the great amazement of young gentlemen who really knew not what they would have, but yet made the greatest noise, reduced the University to that temperament that a man might study and not be thought a dullard, might be sober and yet a conformist, a scholar and yet a Church of Englandman.'

Edmund Verney had gone up while the zeal which had carried these reforms was not yet spent. The strictness of the college discipline in his time is in striking contrast to the experience of an undergraduate in the next century when authority was nodding again. Edmund Verney could not sleep out one night without incurring the risk of being sent down. Edward Gibbon relates his 'notorious absences.' 'A tour in Buckinghamshire, an excursion to Bath, 4 excursions to London, were costly and dangerous follies, and my childish years might have justified a more than ordinary restraint. Yet I eloped from Oxford, I

returned, I again eloped in a few days, as if I had been an independent stranger in a hired lodging, never once hearing the voice of admonition, or once feeling the hand of controul.¹

In Edmund's carefully kept accounts very little is spent for wine, the heaviest charge is for '3 Quart Bottles of Sack, 2 of White Wine & 4 of Claret,' amounting to 12s; there are frequently small entries of 'Oranges, Apples, Sugar Plums & Spice, for Tuk 1s., for Oysters 1s 6d., for De Vries' Logic 2s, for wood as billet & faggots 14s. 6d' In the quarter ending Lady Day 1688, while he pays only 3l 4s. 6d. to his tutor and 9s. 3d. to his bookseller, 'a long wigg' costs him 2l. 5s.

He is settled again at Trinity College, and his father resumes the correspondence; he has desired Alderman Townshend to pay Mun six guineas in gold and ten pounds in silver, and in the breeches, packed with his new clothes, 'within one of the little Pockets buttoned' he is to find '3 Guinnys done up in Paper.' 'I durst send you no Lemons nor oranges for feare of stayning your Clothes I hope you tooke care to have your Bedd well ayred & warmed.'

March 1,
1687.

'Child, I am very Gladd to see that you Got safe and well to Oxford and That you have yr Name againe given you By Mr. President and That he was so Civill to you, and That you stand Rectus in Curia quo ad Collegium Tuum again. Pray Have a Care of a Relapse, Least it prove a worse Disgrace to you (to say no inore) then it was at first, And never Keepe such Damed Company for the Time to Come, whose evil communications (tho' witty) corrupt good manners, and strike at ffundamental obedience as Honesty, and Religion, and in Lieu of them Plant in Mens Hearts and minds Hyppocrisie, and Knavery, and Impiety. And so make People grow only fitt for Hell and the Devill: And Pray no more journeyes nor Lying out of yr College without yr Tutor's Leave or myne: my sonne mark well my words who am thy ffather, And Lett Them Take Deepe

¹ *Autobiographies of Ed. Gibbon.* Murray, 1896, p. 227.

Roote in Thee, and Thou shalt find Benefit By observing Them.'

'Child . . . I saw Thom. Smith Here last night as plaine March 10,
1688
as a Pike staff in Cloaths, but They Looked very Gentile upon Him, Being cleane & Neate. Why Did you not write me word that your Chumme was made Master of Arts?'

To Dr. Thomas Sykes he writes 'This day about noone April 6,
1687.
yr Messenger Brought me the ill newse of my Sonnes unlucky accident last Munday. I am very sorry for it. But am extremely joyfull to understand by you that the worst is past with this and that He is in so fayre a way of amendment soe I Hope There is noe Danger in a dislocation of an Elbow, where such excellent Chirurgions and Bone setters are at Hand, and Physitians if occasion Be: I Gluesse this was done a wrestling and the Place was very ill chosen for such an exercise. But since it is Done, all the Helpe for Him and care of Him must Be Hadd as can possibly Bee And so I hope it wilhee a warning to Him to Be more carefull of Himselfe Hereafter. I am infinitely obliged to you for yr great care of Him and the Advice you gave me of his ill accident and his present condition, and Returne you Millies Millena Millia of Thankes for it: if I finde myselfe any wayes able, & that the weather Be ffayre, I wilhe wth Him tomorrow, However I will send to Him in case I cannot come, and in the meane while I now send Him my Blessing and Heartily pray for his Speedy Recovery and Happinesse, wch I desire you to Tell Him from me.'

'Child,—Nedd Brought me last fryday yrs of the 22nd April 20
1687
And last Night late I Received yrs of the same date wch came by the Post: But send to me no more that way for it is the worst way, and almost as Deare as if you Hyred a foote messenger on purpose. There is a Bisseter Carryer Called my Lord Ellis who comes and goes 4 times a weeke betweene Oxford and Bisseter, so when you write to me you may direct yr Letters to me To Be Left with Mr. John Burghnesse a mercer at Bisseter, who will give it to one Mr. Warry who Keepes Winslow Market, and so I may get a Letter from you any Thursday. I Believe it is Good to exercise yr arme

moderately, that the sinues may Be stretcht by Degrees unto their pristine Length, But you must Be vastly Carefull in the Doing it, Least yr Elbo slippe out again, and then it wilbe exceeding Difficult ever to make it stay in the right Place : are you sure it is right sett, for my Man Tells me that you can Hardly Bring it to yr mouth so that if it should Be wrong set, the Chirurgion wilbe apt to Lay the ffault upon the shrinking of the sinues, and throw it off of Himselfe, for tho' without all Doubt Mr. Poniter is an excellent Chirurgion and I Believe a very carefull Honest man, yet I know not whether He Be so good a Bone Setter, tho' He may Bee Both.'

In May Edmund sends 'his Bay Pacer because he is a very easy goer,' with two servants on horseback to fetch his son home, being still anxious about his arm. He is to bring his new gloves and to ride carefully. The Oxford surgeon charges three guineas for his attendance ; he came to Mun every day for about a fortnight, 'and applied several Poulcesses and Oyntments to the elbow.'

May 11,
1687.

Mr. Sykes writes to Edmund: 'S,—I send this with your Sonn to give you thanks for all Kindnesses which I have Received of you and acquaint you with his condition. His arme is free from paine, but he hath not yet the right use of it, And upon that Account as soon as I was fearfull that all was not right, I would have had him gone home to you in order to his consulting some very skilfull Chirurgion, and particularly advised him to one Mr. Freeman who lives near Daventry in Northamptonshire, and is every market Day there at the Wheatsheaf. This man here is look'd upon by Physitians and others as the most skilfull Bone setter in all England, And therefore I had a desire that your Sonn should have his opinion ; But this I thought could not be conveniently done unless he first came to you, that he might have had the convenience of your horses, and ye attendance of one of your servants, Besides the Chiurgion here all along hath been confident in asserting that the bones are in their right place, and stands to it still, which made him less careful to consult

another. His lameness or one thing other hath so troubled him since his last Returne that he hath not minded his business so well as otherwise he might have done, And when he is well he does not love to rise in a morning, and therefore looses part of the College exercise, but I hope these things will be mended if he Returne againe perfectly well.'

Edmund took Mr. Sykes' advice, and writes to John of their visit to Daventry:

'The famous Bone setter Mr. ffreeman Lookt upon the arm and felt it, and sayd it is right sett, and nothing out, but That the sinues are shrunk wch makes Him That Hee cannot Hold his Arme straight: But Mr. ffreeman sayes his Arme will Do well: and Be as straight as ever, if Hee Doth use it and exercise it with care: and ffollow his directions and prescriptions. I Lay at the Wheate Sheafe in Daventry, and met wth Dr. Skinner There, who is very well I saw also my old ffrind Nan Birt now Arnold, and her Husband: so on the next morning I Ridd with my Sonne to Northampton to show Him that pretty Towne, where wee Dined at the George Inne And I sent for one Mr. Dover the Town Clark and my man Dover's Brother, and one Mr. Stone a Trooper in Captain Lumley's Troope whom I Knew, to Dine with mee, and wee saw all and were very civilly merry and so wee Came Home, I Thank God very safe and well. The Trooper Told me that t'other Day two Troopers fell out about a Horse shoe, and went out and ffoight, and one shot the other in the Head, and Killed Him dead upon the Spott and He that Killed Him was shot in the shoulder Himselfe, But Hee Gott his wound Dressed and ffledd There be 3 Troopes quartered in Northampton' After Mun's return to college his father writes:

'Child,—I Received yrs of ye 24th. And you can Hardly imagine How joyfull I Am, that you are well, I need not Tell you that I wish you a long continuance of Health, when I Do Assure you that I Reckon it my Chiefest ffelicity in this world. Therefore I Leave it to you to Come to mee when the Doctor and yr selfe Doe Think ffit, only Bee carefull

London,
May 27,
1687.

of yr selfe by the way, and Lett me Know the Day beforehand. I Have writt very Earnestly for new shirts for you, and I Do Hope to Receive some Here tomorrow by Franc Hall my Carryer, if my folke send none I shalbee very angry. I Do Keepe my Charrett in Towne, But my Charretier Nedd Smith is as inexpert a Driver as Phaeton was, neverthelesse I Doe venture my selfe now and then with Him.'

In the summer of '87 Edmund has a house-full of guests at East Claydon; Mun is at home and helping to entertain the good company. 'Sir Richard Temple drank here on his way to the Aylesbury sessions and his two sonnnes eate a neates Tounge with me yesterday, and I Gave Them a Bottle of wine as They came from Eaton Schoole to go Home to Stow.' Lady Gardiner and her son Jack are expected; the Hillesden family come over to dinner. Edmund has ordered a new chariot from Stone, a London coach-builder. 'I find you are very Satyricall upon Sr fleetwood Dormers Chariot,' he writes to John, 'I am affrayd you will Dislike myne and Think it ridiculous, for it is not very modish but I Think it is convenient, pray Tell me yr opinion before it Be made up.'

Aug. 17,
1687.

Mun asks his uncle John to buy him 'a Cravat Ribbon of any modest colour, and as much as will make a hatband of the same, all made up according to the mode' in London. The news at Claydon is that 'old Mrs Roades of Flynmore is dead.' There is a constant interchange of hospitality between the two family houses; a note of Mun's to his grandfather has survived. 'Sir My ffather is under the Rasor: Therefore He has commanded me to present his humble duty to you, and to Let you Know that he will waite on you at dinner and so will also, Your most Dutyfull Grandson and humble Servant.'

He is back at Oxford for the winter term, and his father writes:

Dec. 11,
1687.

'Child,—I Have not Heard from you since I saw you. And I intend for London (God Willing) some Time this weeke with yr Grandfather, I shalbe very Gladd to Heare

by my man tomorrow, That you are well, and particularly yr face and Arme, and what Physick you Have Taken Since, and How it agreed with you, Bee sure as Nothing Bee Done to Strike in that Humeur.'

'Child, I shall expect you on Satterday next and Bidd ^{Jan 8,} you very welcome, in the meane while I wish you a prosperous journey. I was sorry for the sadd accident that Happened betweene the two Brothers Treavers [John Trevor, son of Viscount Dungannon and Anne Lewis of Anglesey, was accidentally shot by his brother Marcus], but Evill ^{1688.} Accidents Happen Here alas, for Count la Coste a french man, and Nephew to my Lord ffersham was Killed t'other day in St. James Square By one Mr. Grymes. I Have a new shiit Here Ready for you, and shall Buy Muzeline Cravats and Ruffles, against you come to me.'

'Child,—I am gladd to heare that the redness of your ^{Dec 31,} face is all most vanished so as hardly to be perceived, and I hope you finde yourselfe in health other ways, and if you do, don't you give your Body to physick, for the sound need no physision and so that he that lives physically lives miserable. I would have you exercise your Body with Mr. Sionge and your minde with Mr. Sikse, and Keep good Hours and a seperat holesum diet and have a care of over heating your selfe and catching cold, then I hope you will enjoy Long health, for that is the way and so I pray God Bless you and do you Be sure to Remember thy Creator in the dayse of thy youth. . . . My Cosen Ann Hobart's Maid Nan Rogers is to Be married to one Berger a french Barber, an unfortunate Protestant, to avoyd Sulla in his own country comes Heare into ours, and is Like to fall very suddenly into Charibdis thro' so foolish a choise.' 'You might Have Written me newse of Magdelin Colledge without Reflexions, and then there can come no Harme of it, for those are not state affaires.'

'Let no Body see my Letters to you.'

'Child,—I am often askt How you do by some Persons ^{London,} that I Ghuesse Do not aske out of true Kindnesse, but ^{Feb 19,} wishing at the same time that you were otherwise, as old ^{1688.}

Th: Stephens used to aske often How his mother Didd, Hoping for her Death, and when He was Answered that his mother was well, He went away sorrowfull and sayd that They Lived Long at East-Claydon. You write with such pittifull Pale Ink that by the time your Letter Comes Hether it is scarce Legible' Edmund has got down to the parlour, wearing a 'slitt shoe'; Mun junior has paid 10s. entrance money for his fencing-lessons.

London,
March 17,
1688

'Child,—I Like well what I perceive by y^{rs} of the 15th That you Learne to exercise the Pike and Musquet as well as ffence of Mous' New-house, But to send you any of my Carabines from Home, I shall not, for I Am very Nice in my owne Armes, especially when I know you Have Been negligent or Heedlesse in Losing a sword Already. I Hadd rather Go to the Minerries and Buy a little Gunne with a match Lock, we^h I Believe I can Have for 10 or 12 shillings, for you, I was once a Buying one of that Price for my selfe of Mr. Nornian, deceased, but wee disagreed about 2 or 3 shilling so I Had it not: But I Ghuesse you may for a shilling or 18 pence Have a little Gunne & a flask Sent you from any Gunsmith in Oxford Good enough for to serve yr Turne for such a purpose.' Edmund had just paid 4*l.* 15*s.* for a gun for his own use.

'Tho: Gardiner was Here this morning, He Hath Been the Circuit as far as Bedford and Huntington & was Retained in Several causes, we^h was very much to his Credit, being the first Circuit that Ever Hee went: you say you care not How plaine y^r Cloathes Bee provided yr Linnen and Trimming Bee good, I see you affect finery but you are under a grand mistake for the best Gentlemen and noblemen that are Belonging to the Army, Go exceeding plaine in Both cloathes and Trimming, for to go otherwise Habited is Like Bestowing nine pence in sauce to make a Dish of Meate worth Three pence: & so God in Heaven Blesse you.'

London,
March 24,
1688.

'Child, I shall send you two pounds of the best Chocolate upon next Munday by the Carryer, better than any that can be had in Oxford or Cambridge. But it is Like casting Pearle

afore Swine, that understand not the Value of it, as I Do that saw it made.

'Yr Grandfather was Taken ill last Tusday, But I Thank God is finely Well Recovered, so There is a good subject for yr Pen to write a congratulous Letter thereupon.

'Why Didd you not Tell me that yr Bishop of Oxford¹ was Dead, such Remarquable occurrences you should Impart that Happen Neare you, or elce writing will signify nothing more then I Am well as I Hope you are, & my scribling is Done.'

Mun writes, as his father suggests, a careful letter on large paper and with an ample margin, in which after many well-turned phrases of inquiry he sends the University news. 'Most Honoured Grandfather,—Doctor Lamphier, Head of Heart Hall died last Friday ["the greatest eater that ever I knew," writes Dr. Pridcaux], and one Mr. Thornton a fellow of Waddam Colledge has a great friend the Chancellor for the headship of the said hall This Doctor Lamphier was likewise History Professor to the university, and now there are three Persons stand for that Place, one Doctor Alldworth lately a fellow of Magdalen Colledge, and Mr. Finch, Warden of all souls Colledge and one Mr. Dodwell a forreiner but with all a very learned man, and of an extraordinary Good Character. The Election will be made tomorrow by convocation, and it is thought Mr. Dodwell will carry it.

Oxford,
April 1,
1688.

'I Present my humble duty to you, and my Father, and my love to my Sister; and this is All at Present from me, Who am your most Dutyfull Grandson Edmund Verney.'

'Child,—I Received y^{rs} of the 3^d And Am Gladd you Like the Chocolate & Bicinelli I sent you. I Am sure They were as good as could Bee in their Kind, the King God Blesse Him cannot ate Better. Yr Grandfather shewed mee the Letter you wrote to Him t'other Day to congratulate

London,
April 7,
1688.

¹ Samuel Parker, the intruded President of Magdalen, who, having been 'puritanically educated,' became an extreme champion of the divine right of Kings and was famous for his 'flexibility of conscience' under James II.

his Recovery, w^{ch} I Read and Like very well, . . . my Lady Gardiner Having finisht her Affaires with Mr. Thomas Gardiner, He went yesterday to Cambridge to Reside There at his fellowship in Peter-House till next Terme, where He is to exercise the office of a Deane, w^{ch} is properly censor inorum. You write to me to Buy you a new Sute of Cloathes against Easter w^{ch} I Do not Think fitt to Bee Bought so soone, because I intend only to Buy you a Campagne Sute this Summer, w^{ch} I would Have you Have ffresh to Appeare with me at the Camp, w^{ch} I Have some Thoughts of shewing you if I Live & am well and able.'

London,
April 21,
1688.

'Child,—I would Have you Go as soone as may Bee unto One Mr. Tho: Wrenches at Paradise Garden in Oxon, And see and examine what Right Dutch Artichoakes, True in the Kiuds without Mixture, and 6s. 8d. pr Cent Hee Hath, And send mee a full account Thercof by the next Post, because your Grandfather and I Both would Have some from Thence. . . . Send me word whether Colly flower Plants may Be Hadd at Oxford and at what Rates by the Hundred.'

May 5,
1688.

Mun writes that artichokes cost 10s. per hundred and that 'Collyflowers may be had of several nurserymen in Oxford from 2s to 5s. and 6s. a hundred,' but his father and Sir Ralph 'will Have no more to say to Them at those Rates, But Then,' they ask, 'why Didd Mr. Th: Wrenches sett out in the Gazette by way of advertisement that Hee would sell the right Dutch Artichoakes without mixture at a Noble, wch is 6 shill : 8 pence the Hundred?'

May 8,
1688.

'Most Honoured Father,—I understand that mine of the 29th. last Post did not thoroughly satisfy you concerning my debts of the last quarter due at our Lady Day last, and particularly concerning that which I owe to the Colledge which is 09^s 10^s 07^d because I did not particularize for what, and I Perceive you Think that this colledge debt is only for bare meate and drink together with my chamber rent which is not so, for we gentlemen do maintain all the colledge servants and serviters, and something we pay quarterly for university dues, and there are severall other expences which

at present I cannot think on that are Reckoned in for Battles : But as for my Bedmaker, Landresse, and Barber, which you supposed to be appendants to the College they are not payd by the Burser but by me, so they are not Put down in the Buiser's Booke amongst my Battles : neither Did I put them down in the account of my debts, because I have them allready. I Perceive you think my expences very great, but I am sure if you rightly understood the necessity of them you could not chuse but think them very reasonable and me very frugall . . . I did not long since design to go through a course of Chymistry, the expences of which would amount to 3 pounds and upwards, but thinking it a charge not absolutely necessary I have desisted in my designs, and Let slipp a very Good opportunity. . . .'

Natural science had been dabbled in by the Oxford dons for many years, but it was a new subject with the undergraduates, and the distinction between chemistry and alchemy was not clear to the mind of the country squire.

'I am gladd,' Edmund writes, 'you Didd not Goe May 19,
1688 thorough with a Course of Chymistry, That sort of Learning I Do not approve of for you, it is only usefull unto Physitians and it impoverisheth often those that study it, and Brings constantly a Trayne of Beggars Along with it. . . .'

'Most Honoured Father,—I writt to you before last May 22,
1688 Easter for new Cloathes, for the truth of it is, mine do begin to be so bad, that I am almost ashamed to weare them. . . .'

'Child,—I Have Bought Cloth for my selfe and for you May 26,
1688 to make new Cloathes, weh is now in the Taylours Hands to Be made up, And I Gave Him great Charge to make yr Cloathes Gentill and Modish as can Bee. Yr Cloth is something Lighter than myne. My Cosen Nicholas Tells me that Mr. Newhouse is Turned Trooper, and that Ho did it for a subsistence ; I am very sorry that a man of his Parts and ingenuity could not maintaine Himselve without Turning Souldier, for tho' the Profession is Honorable, yet There is alwayes abundance of Badd Company attends it, weh makes mee not so ffond of yr continuing to Bee his

Schollar as I was Before. My father's coachman Neld, is so troubled with flatus Hypochondriacus that he cannot drive my father, and the dogs in our Country are much subject to Madnesse this yeare: therefore Have a care of Them, and Don't Play with Them'

May 29,
1688.

Mun wishes he had been consulted before his suit had been ordered; he believes that 'stuff will be more modish than cloth this summer, and that most people will weare it But however seeing you have Bought cloth already I am very well contented with a cloth sute; I hope you will consider to buy me some good shirts or elce some sort of wastcoat sutable for Summer ffor it is not fashionable for any Gentleman to go Bttened up either summer or winter but especially summer. I shall likewise want new stockings and lased ruffles to weare with my new clothes. My Month ended yesterday with Mr. Newhouse, and I do designe to pay him the 15s next time I see him: it is true that he rides in a troope, but he tells his schollars that he only rides as a reformado in hopes of getting a commission for a Cornets place, and that the Coronel has promised to free him whensoever he pleases.'

June 12,
1688.

Edmund's corpulence and his sufferings increase, he has gained 20 lb. in weight in a few months; he is going to law with his man, Dick Lonsdale, at the Assizes, and is retaining Sir John Holt. Mun begs to be allowed to come and nurse him; he could be with him 'at one day's warning by the flying coach,' but his father, though alone in town, will not hear of his coming up to 'such a sickly place.' Mr. Duncombe and Mr. Butterfield have been to see Mun in Oxford.

June 30,
1688.

'Child,—I perceive you Think yr new Cloathes too warme for the Summer, But I Do not, if it Bee a ffault, I am sure it is a good one: Then you wonder why I made it a halfe mourning sute, and that you Hoped that none of our Relations are Dead: to which I answer wee Have lately Lost one of our neare Relations, my Cosen Pegg Danby, a Person of great quality, who is Dead and Buryed Here in St. Martins: And I Have made my selfe a halfe mourning Sute,

And Declare I mourne for Her. My cosen Winwood is also Deade. But However halfe mourning Sutes are as much worne, and are as modish as any Thing out of mourning. I see no Body weare Rich Sutes But Souldiers, and mercantile fellows, that covet to appeare very Brave and Gentlemen Like, when They are not soe. as for another payre of Breeches if you desire Them I shall Buy you a payre tho' it Bee Needelesse: You say you Have Been wonderfull shugall, if I finde it so, I shall commend you extremely: My unhealthy condition makes me spend more then I would Do in spite of my self. . . . Next Munday I am to Bee of a Jury at the King's Bench, in a 'Tryall betweene the Lord Chancellour and one Mrs. Herbert of our Country: And I will Be There if I am well: And so God Blesse you, and send us a happy meeting.'

He encloses three patterns of striped cloth, but Mun desires that 'for variety's sake his next pair of breeches be made of silke.' 'Mr. Hunt, one of the fellows of our colledge, and a little suspected in his religion, is lately preferred to the chaplain to the tower.' Edmund orders Mun a pair 'of Damask Silke Breeches, as Gentile as any Body weares Them,' and has 'them up in a little Deale Box with a payre of modish shoes Buckles.' July 12,
1688

Mun's undergraduate friend Sir William Dormer, who was to have shared with him the honour 'of speaking verses in the Theatre,' is in Rebellion against his Tutor & Grand-mother, And is resolved to bee Master over Himselfe, he hath taken a Ramble some say to see the Camp'; but Mun is much more dutiful and diligent. We leave him in the careless enjoyment of his Oxford life, unconscious of the great changes which were to befall his own home and the kingdom before this fateful year 1688 had run its course.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE REVOLUTION AND ITS PROLOGUE.

1686-1689.

IN the little world represented by the Verney letters there was so great a dread of civil war and so firm a determination to believe the best and to make the best of the King, that it seemed impossible for James II. to alienate the loyal hearts that surrounded him. Mr. Butterfield's journal gives a fair and temperate retrospect of the changes wrought in the opinions of the country clergy during the three years of James's reign.

In the Bucks elections following King Charles's death, the Rector of Claydon bestirred himself, in strong opposition to Sir Ralph's wishes, for the return of Judge Jeffreys' candidates. 'I entered upon the Ministerial function very young,' he says of himself,¹ 'in the latter end of the loose Reign of K. Ch: 2nd, when Reformation was at an Ebb & Toryism & Bigotry, or the Arbitrary Power of the Prince, & the Authority of Mother Ch: ran high. Passiev Obed: & Non Resistance, & no Salvation out of the Episcopal Comunion, were the common Topicks of the Court, & Popular Sermons; the Test of Loyalty, & good affection to the Church of England & the high Road to Perferment. I being then, as now, settled in a low Station & not affecting greater, had little occasion or concern to enquire nicely into those controversial matters which exercised these learned & dignified men; being then as now, hasty in my Judgmts, a thorough conformist. So taking things according to the ancient fame & approbation,

¹ I am indebted to the kindness of Miss Butterfield for permission to use Mr. Butterfield's MS. Journal in her possession.

I rather inclined to the part of the Government than its opposers. But the latter end of K. James' Reign, when the Public Danger from Popery & arbitrary Power in the Prince began to show its effects on the Constitution, the Liberties & Properties of Particular Persons, & brought the matter home to me & every one, & the Danger grew still more palpable & imminent, I then began more seriously, & distinctly & impartially to consider the nature of Govern^t & the Constitution of the Church & was soon determined with the rest of the Clergy to give up Non Resistance, & resolved that no Authority is Sacred nor claims Submission but Legal; & consequently that if those in whose Hands the Legislative Power is lodged do employ it to the manifest Destruction of the community, for whose sake & Benefit it was committed to them, they may be resisted & deposed & the sword wrested out of their Hands by the People. Upon this Principle I resisted reading K. James's Declaration, wishd well to the Prince of Orange's Expedition, submitted to him (as the Clergy generally did) when K. J. abdicated, & he succeeded to him; & when the Convention of the States of the Kdom had invested him & his Consort Q.M. with the Regalties, I swore Allegiance to him considerably & freely, tho' not hastily, & he having approved himself thro' the Course of his Reign a true Father of his Country, the most Legal Governor in Ch: & State as well as generous Deliverer of these Nations & of all Europe from Popery and Slavery; I payd him the most hearty Love & Obedience, as I do now the greatest veneratⁿ to his memory. Having discharged my mind from those slavish Principles of Govern^t in the State, with equal freedom I weighed the controverted Points of Religion, & came to this Resolution, that the more fundamental & essential Doctrines of Faith & good life being first secured, matters of opinion, & externals, modes & forms of Worship & Discipline are not to be impos'd or urg'd farther than is consistent with Peace & Charity.'

For such results no price might seem too high to pay; but at the period we have reached, opinions like those were still in the melting pot.

During the year 1686 indignation was strongly aroused at the religious persecutions in France. 'The Pope himself, tis said, is very Compasmat to the poor protestants beyond sea, and has rit to his Nuntia Fr. Lenenya to receive all as coms and give them protection, and will send all provisions as fast as hee can to them, Ittyly cannot furnish them so hee will order provisions out of Millan, hee is much ther frend and tis beloved will excomunycate the King of franc if he stops not his fury.'

In March John writes: 'The brif is red in severall churches for the protistants, bot many not satisfyed through whot handls the money shall goe, till it be ordered in hands to the minds of the publick, ther will not be much given.' Later on we hear of large sums subscribed by the City, and of collections made in private houses 'to the French Protest'ant Breife.' 'Dr. Lower hath given £100, my Ld. of Bedford £100, & people in his house 30s. more, Col: Russell £10, Wiseman the Surgeon £5. Three Merchants' houses in Basinghall St. have given £100 or thereabouts, one of 'em Sir Peter Vandgrat £20 himselfe, his 4 little children each a guiny, his Lady & Servants 4 or £5 more; another was Sir Jeremy Tambrooke, the thurd one Col: Grey and his partner both Barbadoes merchants.' In the teeth of this feeling, the King exasperated the City by authorising the building of Roman Catholic chapels against the law, while he attacked the privileges of the City companies in ways for which no plea of conscience could be advanced. King James has turned out 'many learned men of the Law,' and made ten new Serjeants; 'it was strongly reported that Williams or North should be Attorney General, since that honorable & worthy gentleman Mr. Finch is put out, and Sir Thos. Power is to be Solicitor Gen:.' The French are threatening Lisbon and fortifying themselves in the West Indies.

Mun gives voice to the savage hatred of Louis XIV. that was growing amongst the country squires. It is statling to hear so good-natured a man rejoicing brutally over the terrible details of the King's illness; no punishment is ade-

quate 'for his unparalleled cruelties to his Protestant subjects' 'The French King. . . will never be done, Demanding & Claim-
ing & Destroying, and Taking forcibly until the Devill hath May 4,
1686.
him. In the Interim I heare he stincks Alive, & his Carcass
will stinck worse when he is dead, & so will his memory to
all eternity. I am a most grievous & wicked sinner, yet I
will not change my Condition with him if I mought, to have
his Kingdom.'

The crowd show their Protestant sympathies in a congenial manner, and there are free fights between the City apprentices and the trained bands. 'On Sunday some boys and rabble were very rude in Lime Street, at the residence of the Prince Palatine, where the priests were at their devotions; one had his head broke, but by the help of constables and my Lord Mayor the rabble were dispersed, and some taken and committed'; on the Sunday following the same scene is repeated. Lord Powis, as a Roman Catholic Peer, was very unpopular. He had just built a grand house in Lincoln's Inn Fields and was known to be much trusted by the King. Mun writes how 'Mrs. Powis [his next-door neighbour] Lyeth now sick of the small Pox, in her fine new Dampe House, with her fresco shash windows & coole guilt leather & smelling Paint, & they say shee is with child, so it may goe hard with Her.' Penelope hears the Duchess of Grafton lament to the Queen 'that her father dyed a papist, but lately turned; she exprest much trouble, twas not thought wisely don to show it at court.' 'The D. of Albemarle has laid down all his comm^{ss} on my Lt Feversham being made Lieut. Genl.'

John tells Sir Ralph 'that Mr. Lee [Lord Lichfield's July 7,
1686. brother] is said to be married to one Mr. Williamson a sergeant-at-arms' daughter, that lies at Westminster; it seems she and her sister used to come to the confectioner's where he lodged. I have seen and talkt to 'em; she is not a beauty, but her portion is £1,000.' 'Lady Henrietta Wentworth is dead & hath given all her Estate to her mother for life, & then to my Lord Lovelace, so shee will bee a brave match for Sir William Smith.' The latter had

recently lost his wife, Doll (Hobart), with less regret than the family felt to be her due. 'My Lord Chancellor's brother, Mr. Jeffereyes, lately consul at Alicant, hath received the honour of knighthood.'

The King is making a real effort to improve the efficiency of the army; he reviews single regiments in Hyde Park, and compliments Lord Lichfield on the smartness of his men; he is accessible to any private who can give him information. 'As the King came from Council 7 or 8 Souldiers Scotch & Irish Presented themselves to him, who came from the Buss in Holland, his Maj: tooke one of their Musquetts in his hands & vewing it found it to be of a size longer then those his souldiers use: after discoursing them, he Ordered they should be provided for. . . . Abundance of people go out of town, to see the gallantry of the camp at Hounslow Heath, where it's said the officers will be extremely fine.'

The popularity of the camp is, however, endangered by the outrages the soldiers commit on the civil population; discipline must have been difficult indeed to maintain, when the officers were constantly engaged in fighting one another. 'Mr. Culpepper brother & heir to my L^d Culpepper shoots with a blunderbuss one M^r Minshull of the Guards, brother to him of Borton by Buckingham; Sir Richard Temple calls him cousin and says he was not dead on Saturday.' 'One Mr. Ash (whose mother was Nancy Harrington's eldest sister) being a small officer in the camp, was killed by Capt. Cooke (who bought Skipwith's command), who darted his sword at Ash and killed him, for which he is at present withdrawn. Capt. William Freeman, who killed Mr. Ralph Freeman, of Surrey, at Epsom, is at Calais, and some say Lord Dartmouth hath obtained his pardon of his Majesty.' 'Capt. Bellinger and Capt. Pack fought in Leicester Fields, the former was wounded, but parted by Harry Wharton and Mr. Smith.' 'The small officers' are amply warranted by the behaviour of their seniors. 'Admiral Herbert coming with Colonel Kirk from dining in the City to the Play House, cut (on what provocation I know not) Lord Devon-

Aug. 8,
1686.

Dec. 2,
1686.

shire's coachman; on which his Lordship said nobody should correct his servant but himself. I heard they were to fight, four against four. But his Majesty hath been pleased to prevent it.' 'A soldier pistoll'd a watchman in Southampton Buildings, saying, some time before, he had been affronted by a watchman there, of which he was resolved to be revenged, and therefore went to them and killed one, whether he that affronted him or another it mattered not.'

Murders are too common to excite much comment, but the civil worm turns at last when 'Six or 8 souldiers goc from the Camp to Robb an Orchard. The Provo's seized them, & bringing 'Em near their own Regiment, about 200 men with drawn swords Rescued 'em, & the Provo's made their Escapes into the Officers Tents, who protected 'em untill the Generalls came who appeazed 'em, yet 2 or 3 were Kill'd in the fray.' The sacred rights of property being thus threatened, 'His Majesty came himself to the Camp' to avenge the sack of the orchard, '& diw out the Army, where some of the Mutiniers were Punished.'

'On Sunday, the rabble got together again about the July 24,
Welsh Camp (as they call the fields about the Cow-keeper 1687.
Griffith's house) where with brickbates, which they had from a Brickill near at hand, and which they conveyed about with 'em in wheelbarrows, they pelted the Trainbands, but they did not any great hurt nor received any, only 'tis reported that handsome Fielding with his naked sword scower'd amongst 'em and wounded some of the rabble, and one of the Militia shot a maid dead (in the breast); she only came to see fashions. . . .' 'Tis said that Capt. Swifnix, who in Ireland would not deliver his commission to the Lord-General, is in that kingdom by 15 or 16 men cut to pieces; he was formerly a highwayman in England.'

'Some days past, a barge or pleasure boat going up the July 1687.
river, with four young women and a blackmore, were all drowned on their way to the Camp about Twittenham, by the barge's oversetting, but all watermen were saved; they

July 30,
1687

were young Greenwich ladies, two of them great beauties, a third very handsome, the fourth plain; the eldest of them about 22 years, the beauties 15, and one of them an only child. On Sunday the rabble were again disorderly in Lambs Conduit Fields, and pulled down a Music-house Booth, making merry with wine and other liquors, and the brickbats did also fly about, but there was no mischief done, only one citizen (a scrivener, I think), coming thither to see fashions,' evidently a very dangerous amusement, 'was shot thro' the leg, and so was carried off, and one of his legs is since cut off.' There was the further excitement of 'a whale who came up as high as Woolwich, and was hunted and shot at and much wounded, but she made towards Gravesend, so I suppose she is got to sea again,' having had quite enough of the turbulent City. Dr. Paman writes that 'One in a coffee-house looked so earnestly upon Sir R. Le Strange, that he must ask what he meant—he said he took him for the observator—"Well, what then?" said Sir R. Saith the other: "I find you play very well upon the trump marine, who can vary so many several notes upon one single string; & besides they say you writ the Letter to the Dissenter." "You are mistaken, I answered it" "Nay then," saith the other, "you are mistaken you published it, but you did not answer it." An answer to the answers of the Letter is come out, which hath wit in it.'

Nov. 21,
1687.

At Claydon, the joy felt at Sir Ralph's return to the House of Commons in May 1685 was damped by the prorogation of the Parliament in December, and by a grievous private calamity—the loss of John Verney's young wife. Her life came gently but swiftly to a close; the responsibilities of a wife and mother had been laid too soon on girlish shoulders, and though she carried them bravely, her strength was not equal to her courage and capacity.

May 20,
1686.

Elizabeth Verney died in London, in the twenty-second year of her age. When John buried his 'Dearest Joy' in the vault at Middle Claydon, he buried with her the happiest chapter of his life. There was no break in the outward activities of his career; he was not a man to trouble others

with his sorrows; to them he was the efficient, successful, rather cold man of affairs he had always been, but

'God be thanked, the meanest of His creatures
Boasts two soul-sides—one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her!'

Sir Ralph was extremely unwell at the time of Mrs. John Verney's death, and the Claydon people, who are 'heartily sorry' to hear of it, are yet more anxious about their kind old landlord Dr. Denton is pining 'to let blood under his tongue,' which Sir Ralph 'has noe minde to.' Coleman, the steward, writes. 'I am soe concerned to hear your illness to continue, that I am not able at present to wright to you about any businesse for teares, my prayers I am sure & some hundreds in the County about you, are for your long life & health, both amongst us your Servants & them your neighbours . . . I will to the best of my power bee careful of all your businesse I am imployed in, & observe all your commands about Mrs. Verney's coming downe to be buried.'

May 24,
1686.

John is attending to every detail of the funeral, and of the mourning for the motherless babies: they are to wear crape at 17*d.* a yard, Sir Ralph's cloth-crape costs but 14*d.* The portly coachman, Philip Buckley, is to have two specially large dimity waistcoats at 10*s.* and 'a Pair of mild Serge breeches at 11*s.*' Mrs. Lillie, the housekeeper, sends up 'a bitt of silk for a pattern of the church cushionings,' which are evidently to be also garbed in black. Coleman writes again: 'Here are people daily to inquire of your good health . . . most that know your Worship doe pray for your health, Mr. Butterfield last Tewsdays praid for you in the Church & I hope it will please God to heare our prayers, it being I am sure from mee with an humble heart. Mr Fall & Mr Rutherford of Roxton was here at M^{rs} Verney's buriall, but did not stay to supp here, Mr White & his daughters & M^r Jos: Churchill & his wife & 3 children stay'd supper.'

May 29,
1686.

Mun, who is deeply grieved for his brother's loss, is at his wit's end to devise more remedies for Sir Ralph, as

'he hath been Blooded, Vomited, Blistered, Cupt & Scari-fyed, & hath 3 Physicians with him, besides Apothecary & Chiuurgien'; strange to say, 'hee continues still very weak'



Mun himself takes 'Venice Treacle every night & many other nasty Apothecarys things.' He is recommended Islington, Epsom, or Tonbridge waters. Grosvenor believes

that the waters of Astrop, which he might drink at home, are 'as sanative as the waters about London, which are so chargeable they resemble those of Bethesda, which had noe virtew till an Angell had stirr'd them.' The invalids send their condolences to each other. 'I see you are weary,' Sir Ralph writes, 'of taking any more physicall things, but those that are either old or infirm must be content to doe it some Times.' Cary Stevkeley is in charge of Mun's household, a *persona grata* with him and with Mistress Molly, who has now returned from school.

There is another family funeral this summer; Alexander Denton (senior), of the Middle Temple, died June 8, 1686; the steward's bill for his burial at Hillesden, 'just by the old tower in the Chancel,' is 45*l.* 13*s.* 2*d.*, including 1*l.* 10*s.* 'for gold rings for D^r Sharpe & D^r Sherlock that gave my Master the Sacrament & prayed for him in his last illness.'

We have glimpses from time to time of the beautiful mistress of Hillesden, she is fond of her embroidery, Sir Ralph matches her silks in town, and she writes affectionately of her children. Suddenly a calamity falls on Hillesden House far more bitter to the family than aught that fire and the sword had wrought there during the Civil War.

Alexander Denton and Hester Harman were 'married in 1673 in Middleton Stony Church in Oxon by Mr. Banks'; the rest is told in John Verney's pocket-book. 'After she had had 7 children, on Thursday 29th March 1688, she left his house & him, & Monday Sept. 17, 1688, she was delivered of a girle, w^{ch} he w^d not own, named Eliz. who soon died.' There was a painful trial, in which it was held that as the unhappy woman had carried off with her a sum of 500*l.*, she had forfeited all claim on her husband for support; her own fortune he had long ago squandered. Sir Ralph wrote once to let Alexander know that he had heard of Hester in London; he only replied that he wished her at Jamaica. 'This his wife Hester died in Aug. 1691 about Spittlefields & was buried in Stepney Ch. meanely.'

In the spring of 1687 Nancy Nicholas is 'disposing' of April 16, her only daughter Jenny 'in the wae of matrimony'; 'tis 1687.

April 26,
1687.

to one Sir John Abdy a Bart, of Albins in Essex, his estate is £1500, the house very well furnished thorow out, the joynter £600, no father nor mother, a debt of some £1400 that I hope they will wether out prety esily . . . heare are many qualifcations for making a wife happy.' The younger members of the family did not approve the match, and the mother allows that 'he is no baby, nor so fine a bred man as Sir Ralf Verney,' 'truly he bareth as various carectors as any man in England can doe . . . the sober prudint peisons such as Sir Thos Dike, Sir John Bramston & your once a quaintans M^r Garvis who has been 3 weeks in his house, says he was never drunk in his life, that he never games, that he has not Sir R. V's parts, yet he understands his busines very well . . . he is good humoured, frank, and for entertainments in his house.' On the other hand he bore an 'ill carector in the titell tatell' of society, and among 'the sparks of the town & gentlemen that sett their cravat strings & periwigs well.' Jenny leant to their opinion, though her elderly suitor expressed himself as 'much pleased with her', by the end of a fortnight her mother reported that the match was off, yet 'he impoitunes her every day to come on again, how her good natuer will work I know not for she is perfectly left to herself—tis she must live with him.'

May 1,
1687.

The girl was just of age, and 'Noble Soul' sympathised with her reluctance. 'Cosen Jinny Nicholas Cannot Love an old Man, and I cannot Blame Her, for old Age is very disagreeable unto youth: and I presume her ffather and Mother Have to much Kindnesse for Her then to fforce her. Cosen Doll: Wythers cast off this old Gallant formerly.' Whatever Nancy's theories might be, she was too much of a benevolent despot to be really neutral, and but ten days later Mun hears from Oxford that his son's chum, Denton Nicholas, has gone up with his father, mother, grandfather, and brother to attend Sister Jenny's marriage. 'I find that Jinny Nicholas,' Edmund writes, 'is now my Lady Abdy and plentifully married: Hath a brave House and Land and Great store of good Goods, Besides Honor, of all wch I

wish her much joy.' The good wishes were realised; we hear the next spring 'that my Lady Abdy Doth Lye in of a Boy. to the great Joy of that ffamily,' and the child grows ^{April 7, 1688} 'soo very sensible beyond his age that they fear for him.' It was Lady Abdy's delight to receive her father and mother and her grandfather at her country home, and the numerous Stewkeley and Adams girls were not forgotten. In September 'The Piazza family have gone to bury old Lady Nicholas at Horsely.' The Doctor is much at home at Albyns, he speaks of himself sarcastically as 'lolling on bed or couch,' of no more use in the world, though he can get no one else to think so. Any ailments in the family, however, speedily make him forget his own, and he prescribes for Sir Ralph 'a syrup of Scabious, with whey, or gorse boiled with Damask roses,' which sounds picturesque and delicious.

Meanwhile, in the great world outside, James II. was fast alienating his best friends. Dr. Paman describes how the Nuncio was received at Windsor: 'the King spoke to ^{July 5, 1687.} the D. of Somerset to receive him, but he refused, for by the law yet in force it was treason. . . . About 16 coaches attended the Nuncio; when he appeared he made 3 obeisances, the King & the Queen as often rose up. The D. of Grafton introduced him.' It is not surprising to hear after this 'that his Majestie is but slenderly met in his progress ^{Aug. 21, 1687.} by the Nobility & Gentry of the Counties as he passes.' He is soon busy turning out magistrates from their commissions and officers from their commands, and a commission is going to Oxford 'with large powers of suspending, expelling, etc.' He had offended both Oxon and Bucks by dismissing their popular and capable lords-lieutenant, the Earl of Abingdon and the Earl of Bridgwater, who, as Lord Brackley, had won the famous election of 1685. Sir Ralph hears that he and 'Sr Tho Tirrell & Sr Tho: Lee are left out ^{Dec. 5, 1687.} of the Commission of y^e peace'; the political animus of the transaction is shown by Sir J. Busby's being retained. The time was gone by when Sir Ralph might have been fretted by so ungracious an action; he writes with great serenity: 'If I am left out of the Comission of the Peace I shall have

the less trouble, & my yeares require a Wit of Ease, & I shall bee very willing to sit still.' 'Tho' you care not for it,' Dr. Denton writes, 'yet I believe y^r neighbours will.'

Magdalen College is next attacked. Lord Abingdon, who had stood by the King so stoutly during Monmouth's rebellion, 'sent to y^e fellowes of Magdalen wishing he had preferments for 'em all, but since he had not, that they should be wellcome at his house to Beef & Mutton—for which he had a reprimand from his Maj^{ty} for being soe kind to those that had been the Insolent oposers of his Maj^{ty}'s Comands, or words to that purpose.' At the same time it is rumoured, on the death of the great headmaster of Westminster, 'that one Poulton, a Jesuit, who was Schoolmaster at the Savoy, is to succeed Dr. Busby. The Doctor has left nothing to Sir J. Busby or his children, but all to pious uses.'

When James desired the clergy to read the Declaration of Indulgence from the pulpit, Sir Ralph can hear of 'none about us that read it, but 2 very ordinary persons, having but poor livings.' Anne Nicholas, writing from her daughter's home in Essex, makes merry over the way in which another clergyman endeavoured to neutralise the ill effect of his compliunce: 'We have no news hear but of a Rector in this Cuntry, y^t when y^e declaration was to be Red, they gave it him up as he was going into y^e church to read, & he knew not what y^e paper was, & read it when he had don, "Beloved," sais he, "Hur has read you a paper y^t has nothing in it good for Body or sole, but Her will goe in to y^e Pulpit & preach that to you w^{ch} shall be good for Body & sol," & so Her did Make a Prechment to y^m.'

Aug. 1,
1688.

Nancy feels proudly that she has picked up another gem—'ye newest in Land news I have is of the Mayor of Scarborough, who came up to the K & profest if he might be maid Mair, he w^{ld} doe great things, in particular have the Declaration red; so he was put into his desired offes & afterward sent for ye Minister & gave him ye Declⁿ, but when ye time came he did not read it; & ye Mair maide him be puled out of his Pulpit & had another thair to read it; ye congregation sang Psalmes & a great bussel there was in ye church;

Sept. 11,
1688.

& when church was dun, ye soldears stood Redy & caut up ye Maior & tossened him in a blanket. The Maior is now in town, come up to complain of ye solders, ye chief officer their was our cousen Ously.' Capt. Osley (as he is called elsewhere), being 'wanted,' retires to Holland.

When there is a question of prosecuting the contumacious clergy, Spratt, Bishop of Rochester in a manly letter gives up his seat on the Ecclesiastical Commission. Private patrons are anxious about their livings. Aug 22,
1688.

Dr. Denton hears that 'Pigott hath endowed Ditton Chapel with 50*l*. pr. an. as a Donative, that it may not be subject to any ecclesiastical jurisdiction, his wife with 4 others to present but negatively noe nonconformist, his Almeshouse 2*s* a week apiece & 20*s* for a gowne' 'The L^d Tirconnell & the Titular primate of Ireland have had some words, the former desiring him not to Ordaine soe many Ignorant, Dull, Priests as he did, for Ireland he said, did already swarm with them; whereat the Pimate was soe angry that he is come into Eng^d to make his complaints.' Aug. 14
1688.

Within a few days of the birth of the long-desired heir to the Crown the seven Bishops were sent to the Tower, and there, writes Dr. Denton, 'they are most mightily visited, courted highly by the multitude at Whitehall craving their benediction, as they took water, and so again as they landed at the Tower so that they could scarce get into the Tower.' Sir Ralph 'longs to heare how the Bishops are treated, I pray God to make them firm to doe that wch may most conduce to his Glory & the good security of the Ch. of England.' 'On fryday the 29th The Bishops were tryed, Their Jury were the twelve first returnd Excepting S^r John Bury & M^r Hewers w^{ch} two did not appeare The Lawyers Argued on 4 Points in Each of w^{ch} Holloway & Powell differed from Wright & Alibone; for the K: Were the Attorney & Solicitor Serg^t Trindar, S^r Bar-Shores, Baldock, Wright. for the Bishops were flinch, Pemerton, Polixfen, Sawyer & Ireby, Summers & one other who outdid themselves, after about 9 howres the Jury had a Glass of wine & a Crust of Bread at the Barr & then went to the affaire wherein thay came June 10,
1688. July 5,
1688.

not to a finall Agreement untill Sattuiday morning, when they came into Court & their Verdict was Not Guilty: at w^{ch} there was a greate huzza in the hall: tis said some of the Jury were very froward most of the night for a Contrary Verdict, & some presume to name them. Williams was twice hisst at the Tryall: The Councill Were 7 on Each side, There were about 36 Peeres present, & some observed when the L^d P^r came into Court to give his Evidence that the Peeres did then put on their hatts, those that were uncovered, Alsoe when finch was arguyng a Point wherein he said the K Lords & Comons assembled in Parliam^t: (It being about the Lawes) the Nobility bowed to him Uncoverd as a testimony of their thanks. Powell spoke soe much that some askt if he were Advocate for the Bishops.'

The bonfires that were lit in honour of the Prince of Wales paled before those that blazed forth when the acquittal and release of the Bishops became known, and the fact that these latter were strictly forbidden only made them burn the more fiercely. Even loyal Oxford makes no sign when the news of the Prince's birth arrives. 'there was a bonfire at Magdalen, but at no other College.'

'Judge Roth^m speaking of the Bishops said they were Blockheads, noe Grammarians & that they wrote false English in their Petition & much more such stuff.' 'Judge Heath that came to Northampton and Leicester,' writes Pen Stewkeley, 'gave in his charge that all that made Bonefiers for y^e Bushops being freed, shoud be indited, for hee said it was a riat, & that they did not show themselves good subjects to theare King, but did it on purpos to Affront his magistey, & many such like things hee speakes. The Maior of Norhampton has killed a wagoner, y^t would not goe out of y^e roade his wagon being loaded, & theare ware 3 condemned for morderng an inkeeper, and proved plain against them, but its said y^e have presented Father Petters wth 500*l.*, and y^e have a repreive, & its said none shall soffer, but those y^t made y^e bonefiers shall smart.'

In London 'Tis said that Sir N. B. came out of his

Aug. 8,
1688.

July 4,
1688.

house with sword in hand to suppress the Boyes that made Bonfires but they call'd him Quack & made him glad to take shelter againe.' 'At Buck^m there were a great many Bonfires for the Inlargement of the Bishops & great Acclamations of the people but without any tumult.'

'A Knight at Epsom that had spoak very reflectingly of the Bishoppes before their Tryall, when newes came that they were acquitted, severall Gentlemen went to him & accusd him of it, for which they said they would Toss him in a Blankett, But he protest his greate respect for those prelates, & that they were mistaken, for he onely told people what some Irishmen said of the Bishops; soe they seemd satisfi'd, but this coming to some Irishmen's Eares, they to Justifye their Country came to the Knight, & told him for the falsity laid on their Country-men, unless he produced them, they would toss him in a Blanket publicly, and twas with greate difficulty & shame that he Escaped'

In London the rejoicings for the Prince of Wales' birth began during a heavy thunderstorm, but John considered that the fireworks made a good show on the Thames, '& after them the Greate Guns fired at the Tower & alsoe several vollyes of small shott at the Camp, which I could plainly heare on the Water.' The sound of the guns has hardly died away when 'The Lady Ash is confined to her house for speaking Scandalously of the P: of W:' and other persons 'are seized for talking of him.' It was a strange fate for the heir to the Crown to be dubbed 'the Pretender' from his cradle to his grave. 'Kneller the painter has drawn the Prince' at about a week old, '& 20 copies are already bespoken of him. Tis said the D^{ss} of Monmouth is often at Court & the K. is kind to her children.' 'The Prince was severall times before his going to Richmond Carried by his Lady Governess [Lady Powis] into the King's Garden at S. James's to take the Ayre. A Bedd is sett up at Richmond for the Queen's Majestye to lye there sometimes when she comes to see the Prince. The King and Queen are at Windsor. . . . The Queen Downer hath layd asside her thoughts of buying the Earl

July 18,
1688

June 21,
1688.

of Devonshire's house in Darbyshire, & his Majesty hath perswaded her to settle nearer London' 'At Whitehall the Fine Cristall Glass was taken out of the D of Portsmouth's windows since she went away, & the holes stoppt up with straw very scandalously.'

Aug. 9,
1688.

'The Prince is Indisposed, having been fed on barley gruel with currants in it, 'twas thought fitt that he should suck, & a Plaisterer or Tylers wife was made Choice of, on whom some say the King hath been pleased to settle a Considerable pension for her & her husband's life Whether the Prince live or dye, & he is sent in some Comand into the fleet, & some say he was Knighted before hee went.' Not only is this illustrious individual sent to strengthen our defective Navy, but the Baby is formally made an Admiral.

'Abbot Barberini is to bring the consecrated clouts to England; they are 3 suits richly embroidered with gold.' The Prince was christened James Francis Edward, 'the Pope and the Qu Dow' Catherine of Braganza being gossips'; if the King's aim had been to alienate the sympathy of his subjects, the sponsors could not have been better chosen.

John writes. 'Reports are soe false soe different and soe many that noe true conjecture can be made, onely that wee seem to be Extreainly allarm'd, and worke hard as well Sunday as Workydayes to gett out a fleet, and the Dragoones are gone to the Sea Coasts, as well as other Regiments.' 'Drums are beating up about Wapping for seamen, but few come in.'

Aug 3,
1688.

Ormond, the last survivor of the devoted King's Men of a nobler time, is taken away from the evil to come, and the young Duke appears at Windsor to 'deliver to his Majestye his Deceased Grandfather George & Garter. The late Duke's White Staff will not be disposed of until after the solemnizing of the funerall, where some say it shall be broke over the Coffin.' To emphasise the contrast between his father's servants and his own, we hear constantly of the favours King James showers on Jeffreys.

'On Tewsday the 17th at Bulstrode the Lord Chanc^{lors} Son (aged 15 very low of stature but a fine Schollar) was

married to the Daughter of y^e Last Earl of Pembroke by Portsmouth's Sister, & some say they were Againe Married after the Romish Manner the latter End of the weeke, very lately there was a Decree passed in the young Ladyes favour, she is 13 yeares of Age & taller then her husband. The King was pleased to Weare a Wedding favour of the Lord Chancellor's Sonns, and all the Privy Councillours had alsoe favours given them.' Soon after the audience granted to young Ormond, the King and the Queen go down to Bulstrode Manor to dine with the Lord Chancellor and enjoy his refined society

July 26,
1688.

John is entreitaining some of his late wife's family in August, who are staying with him in town 'to see Bartholemew Faue.'

The officers who have been cashiered for refusing to admit Irish Roman Catholics into their regiments 'behave themselves resolutely when tried,' and John believes their pictures will be sold 'as 'twas done for the 7 Bishops,' so great is their popularity. Much had been done to disoblige the army; the previous year Sir R. Temple is horrified that the King has turned 'Ch. Just: Harbert's elder brother out of a company bought for 800 guineyes, for refusing to repeat the Test, & the El. of Worcester out of a reg^t on the same acct^t who is succeeded by my L^d Powis' sonne.

Mun reports the Claydon news in return: 'I believe the match between M^r Duncombe and M^{rs} Kitty Busby is quite off again, & if she is to have 3000 pounds as I heare she is, I would not wish her such a monstrous clown for I think she deserves a much better.' The Duncombes were thrown into 'a great bustle,' the old man haggling much about settlements; there were even better jokes about the girl's father. 'Sir John Busby seeing his Lady's hoggs, wch I might say were his owne, muzeling some offal Corne by his Barne door, in a great fury charg'd his gun with great shott, fired & missed their bodies filthily,' but hit their legs; Lady Busby cries, and pays secretly for them to be doctored, being valuable beasts worth each 40s. When they recover, Sir John, as blind to his own interests as the King, shoots at

Aug. 11,
1688.

them again, with less murderous results than the weeping lady fears; one hog falls, the rest grunt, squeal, and disappear. Mun is greatly entertained by the vagaries of his hot-tempered neighbour, 'Sir Tarbox Busby,' as he is called in the squibs of the time.

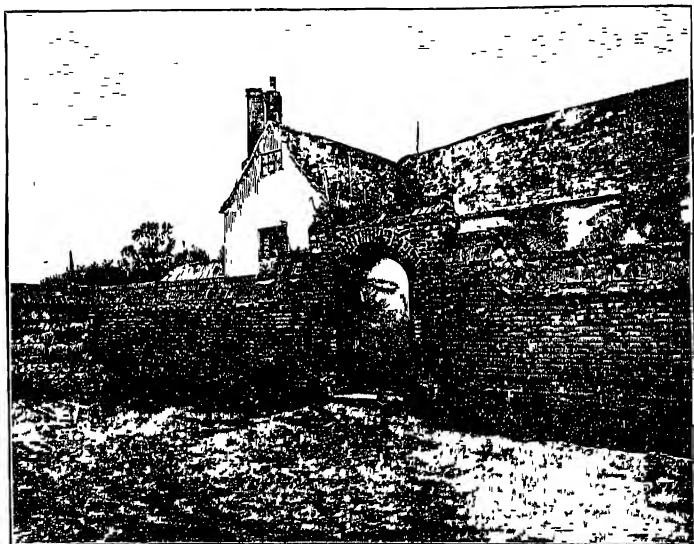
On September 3, 1688, Edmund wrote from East Claydon another of his chatty letters to John in London. 'Deare Brother, I Received yours of the 29th last past, and understanding from my Cosen Natt Hobart and my Sonne what good sport There was at Quainton Race the first day where Chesney the Horse Courser made Thousands of Men Runne after Him with their Swords Drawne, He shott his Pistol at Sir Thomas Lees man Mr Cull, and overthrew Him and his Horse together, and swore Like any Lover that Hee would Have the other Pluck at Mrs. Hortons 5,000^s still, so the next Day I went my selfe to the Race, & Carryed my Cosen Cary and my Daughter in Hopes to meete with the Like diversion, But He was not so obliging to the Company as to Give them the same Pastime, so my Cosen Dentons man Valentine Budd Ridd for the Plate & wonne it, it was a Sylver server, his Horse that wonne it was a grey, There was a Child ridd over and almost Killed, & old Claver of Weeden ffell off from his Horse Being very Drunk, I saw my Cosen Charles Stafford there, & severall Ladys and Gentlemen But not T: S, nor S^r R. T. nor S^r J. B. who is gone away no Body Knows where, nor no Body Knows when He will returne. S^r W. D. never came to the Race, w^{ch} troubles his Granddam Extremely, I Have a Storry to Tell in the next Sheet, that will fill it up & so I shall conclude This who am your most loving Brother & sarvent

EDMUND VERNEY.'

The 'storry' was never told. The next morning, hearing nothing till 8 o'clock, his servants went into his room, and sent a terrified message to Middle Claydon, that their master was sleeping so heavily they knew not what to fear. Sir Ralph arrived in his coach before nine; a surgeon was sent for, who bled him, 'the Queene of Hungary's water & severall other things were applyed to him, nothing would

recall him.' At ten it was all over, and Sir Ralph sat down in the desolate house, and sent an urgent appeal to John to make instant preparations for the funeral, concluding in a very shaky hand, 'God in mercy fit us all for Heaven, Your unfortunate father Raphe Veruey.'

He encloses a list of Mun's household for whom mourning will be required 'Dover his confidential servant, Harry the Coachman, Ned Smith the Groom, Thomas Very the



THE WHITE HOUSE, EAST CLAYDON

Carter, Tom Butcher a Footman, Jacob Golding a Footboy, & little Jacob Hughes about 9 yeares old taken out of Charity. Your Brother's Wife, your Brother's Daughter, Cary Stewkeley, Mrs. Curzon, Two Chambermaids that attend on his wife's person, Doll the Cooke, Anne the Dayry Mayd.' The names are written on the back and front of an old playing-card, another hint of the untidy condition of the house, where the kind-hearted, careless master had scarcely

breathed his last, before it seemed as if every one had a debt to claim, or a story to tell against him. Lady Gardiner describes Edmund's death as being, to himself, ' sudden, rather than unexpected , hee severall times told mee he was confidint hee was neere his end, & so thought all as knew him . . he had many virtues more than most men have.' His intercourse with his father had been specially affectionate and intimate during his last years, and he taught his children to look up to their grandfather in everything. His debts were no new thing ' You will not pay them,' Sir Ralph had said, ' in ten years after I am dead.' Edmund would never suffer such an allusion; ' I desire not only the Honor to Bee (as I have been) y^r fellow Traveller in this World,' he wrote, ' but shall Bee Extremely well satisfyed & pleased to wayte upon you into the next, whenever it shall Please God to Summon you '

The young heir was still at college; neither the widow, though just then in her right mind, nor the little terrified daughter could render Sir Ralph any assistance, and in those first miserable hours, when the old man was left alone in the deserted study to look through a mass of bills and papers, a great wave of bitterness swept over him, and he judged his dead son very hardly.

The money lent Edmund on bond, by the first rough computation, amounted to some 4,500*l*. ' I finde yr Brother died very much in debt,' Sir Ralph writes again to John, ' but as yet I cannot say how much, therefore in my opinion it will be the best way to bury him privately in the night-time, without Escutcheons, or inviting of Neighbours to attend with their Coaches, which is very troublesome & signifies nothing.' He is at no pains to conceal his mortification. To Sir William Smith he writes: ' You oblige me much by appearing sensible of the loss of my Sonne & if you knew in what a miserable condition he hath left his estate & Family, you would woonder at it, and hardly believe it; for its ill beyond Expression.' No monument is put up to his memory. Many relations show real affection for Mun, yet their chief anxiety is lest this should prove to Sir Ralph ' More affliction

than his age can well bear.' Pen Stewkeley writes 'I pray God my Uncle may not lay this too neare him, but bare it like himselfe' She must buy fresh mourning, hers is all worn out, 'having been a long time together in that dismal habit.' Dr. Denton finds a strictly professional ground for consolation, in that Sir Ralph had providentially taken his vomit just before hearing the news, and reminds him that Mun 'hath left a hopefull young son, who will contribute much to put the estate into a good condition again. We all wish ourselves wth you to have the comfort of one another.'

The elaborate mourning required keeps all the women of the family busy. Cary Stewkeley goes about with the steward and the carpenter, measuring the bed and the furniture in the widow's chamber which is to be entirely covered with black, and makes out lists for Sir Ralph, while doing her best to soothe and comfort Mrs. Verney and Molly. But it is upon the son of the house that the heaviest burden falls. Summoned hastily from his happy undergraduate life at Oxford, the boy of nineteen finds his home, so to speak, in ruins, and the father who had always been so good to him beggared at once of life and of reputation. Cary sums up what the family expect from the hope of Claydon, that he should do nothing 'to the prodigys of his helth,' and confide absolutely in his grandfather. Young Edmund shows good sense and feeling beyond his age. The situation is difficult enough; his mother's affairs and his own are in Chancery, and he feels himself 'but as it were a steward to my Father's creditors.' He is surrounded by old servants and retainers, who have large expectations from the heir, which he is quite unable to fulfil; he is trying to get the superfluous men-servants into places, but they are not at all keen to leave. His father's '2 great Horses eat up a deal of horsemeate, the Coach Mares do noe work, & the Greate Barne is so full of ratts, the wheat will soon be eat up & spoiled.' He tries to get in some arrears of rent, but his mother's tenants are clamorous in their requests, and with good reason; 'most of them assure me that my father promised them such & such repairs, others say their Houses were begun in my father's time

& I cannot tell what answer to make them.' One old man's 'actions,' Cary reports, 'is the wonder of markits as well as this towne, being called one of the Old Lords of Claydon; bot Harry Honnour has bin an old sarvant and so has his wife Doll, and both fixed heare, and therefore I wish them well settled, for I pittie every poor creature that has no shelter from wind and weather therefore care to say no more of him.' Mun dares not sell a horse because there are endless delays in making out the valuation, and he cannot even get in the undertaker's bill for his father's funeral, 'he is allwayes a burying somebody or other they tell me at his house when I call.' The garden alone seems to be in good order, 'very pleasant to walk in & the frute is as it should be.'

It is a solitary time at Claydon, for Sir Ralph and John are in town in October, but the lad writes them admirable business letters, and they write to him as regularly as they had written to his father. He is trying to disentangle the estate accounts, and to make out the 'rent-services, freehold rents & quitt Rents, which did use to be mingled in the Rent-roll, with the other rents,' and to settle with a tenant whose sheep 'have flayed the fields.'

Oct 11,
1688.

Sir Ralph sends 'Munsey' excellent advice. 'Be sure to give your Mother's Tenants good words but make none of them any promise for repaires, only that you'l consider of it, & acquaint me with it when I come, tis not a time of year for building, for the frost will fetch the mud walls whilst they are green & the days are growing so short that workmen cannot do a good day's work.' He recommends a ratecatcher, and warns Mun against being enrolled in the Militia in these unsettled times; he must plead youth. Sir Ralph breaks off abruptly, 'to write news is the way to have this letter stopped therefore tis best to leave all alone.' The lad has no wish to keep up the convivial reputation of the White House, but Cousin Denton is going to visit him and will expect claret: can Sir Ralph furnish him? 'There is white wine, Sack & Rhenish in the house, but were I not sometimes bound in civility I should never care to drink a glass of wine as long as I live.'

John has got for his nephew 'a gentile & fashionable mourning sword for 7/6' Cary Stewkeley rejoices that the widow Mary Verney has been sensible enough to dine with them these four days, 'she is one I love extremely.' Later on Cary Gardiner visits the White House, and gratifies poor Mary by taking her constantly to Middle Claydon Church, though the elder lady feels the two miles troublesome to her, ' & the more because I walk in patings.' 'All the congregation seems to rejoice to see her, good woman shee is very kind to mee, and Indeed I pleas her all I can.' When Mary is well 'she works from six to six,' April 14
1689 but she usually spends much of her day in bed, her room is damp 'never seeing the sun & the hangings mold in it', the watchman on his rounds hears her crying out for her maids in the night.

Lady Gardiner's account of Moll's wardrobe is tragic if somewhat mysterious. 'She is forst to ware her blak coat Feb 1689 under her whit fustion, & tis a ridiculos sit to see her whit coat next her cloth crape coat for A father; she must have stoff to make her a petycoat to her night gownd, her old callowco petycoat I shall leve as far as it will goo & she must have 5 or 7 of the narrow lases wch Bell has on hers & blk silke to make it up; she must have 3 yds of any blk cloth crape to peas out her crape coat wch is to short to ware for shee is much growne. Bell must bespeak a pare of blak leather shus for her & charge the woman to make them strong, the very sols of her shus is worn off, she w^d have them hansome as well as strong. She rons much A bout, & tis better to ware out her cloths then be sickly, she wants 2 blk top knots of tafety, a pare of blk leather gloves & some blk pins—wch things if she could be without them I wod not rit for them.'

The attention of the relations has been concentrated on East Claydon, but public events are now too grave to be ignored. 'War is in the air,' and such of the family as are living in London have the cheering conviction that the Metropolis will be the Seat of War. Riots increase; 'all meat risis in town & everything is snatched up, fearing the

Nov. 11,
1688.

prince of orange sh^d stop provisions coming to this toune.' 'The rabble very rudely went to Barge Yard, defaced the Popish Chapel, breaking the windows, drinking up the Priest's liquors both wyne & beare, carrying out what portable, to make a bonfire in the Marketplace, L^d Mayor's show was very poor this year.'

Oct. 29,
1688.

Young Edmund had seen some of the dreaded Irish troops at East Claydon. 'This day passed by here 500 Irish ffoot souldiers in their march to London, & just at the townes end they quarel'd amongst themselves about going over a stile in Newfield, and one of them was knock'd down & his scull much broken & he now layes insensible at Thomas Millers, 'tis thought he will dye very shortly if he is not dead allready.'

Dec. 5,
1688.

Sir Ralph, on his return home in November, is roused up at two o'clock in the morning to send men and horses for the Militia levies at Stony Stratford within twelve hours, 'all the Buck^m trained bands are gon with thos forces as is to march against the Prince' On the whole there is a strong feeling that 'the King will put all to a push & fight,' and this in spite of the desertions to the Prince of Orange, and the Princess Anne's 'prank, weh dus not a littell disples the King.' Cary Gardiner reports the town talk, 'that ther is grat hops of a hapy Settillment in fue months, all the protistants being in most things of a mind, & believed no blod will bee shed in warr, & that our King will rain more happily than he has dun, only thar is great doubts maid how the title of the P. of Wails [no bad name for that luckless infant] will be desided. . . . The Princ marchis slow his resons is not known.' Lord Abingdon and Tom Wharton were amongst the first to join his standard. The story Lord Macaulay has told once for all need not be repeated, but after reading in the letters day by day of the contradictory rumours that keep up the tension of suspense in London, one feels that Cary sums up the situation admirably to Sir Ralph, who is awaiting events at Claydon: 'You will wonder at nothing now. Sertainly no Cronacill can paralell whot has bin produced in a fue

Dec. 12,
1688.

weeks time—to have A King & Prince of Wales & A Queene fly from an Invader without A blow . . . Ther is so many gon in A Weeks time as wod A mase you ; night & day the water is full of baiges. . . . Sir R. Temple is this day gon to the Punc, but thos as gos in now signifyes Littell bot are rather laughed at. . . . We expect the Princ here, in the mean time the moboly will pull downe all the chapels as is nuw set up. Skilton is fled & the City has seased the Tower . . . I thank you for your fat plovers & so conclud.' Dr. Denton writes. ' We are all in a strange confusion, abandoned by K, Qu & Pr. all gone cum pannis, confounded be all they y^t worship graven Images & boast themselves of idols. . . . Its said y^t my L^d Chan^r is gon along with them & consequently ye Seales, & a world more gone or goinge.'

There is great excitement in Buckingham when 'a calash dashes thro' with 2 gentlemen attended by 26 horsemen well armed & mounted,' whose blue coats are lined with orange serge—a new colour in English politics, great ladies are lining their petticoats with orange silk.

When Jeffreys abused Sir Rulph so bitterly after the famous Bucks elections, Cary wished to see him a changed man before he died; his worst enemy must have been satisfied. John's letters in a crisis are as calm as a bill of lading, but the plain facts are too dramatic to need any dressing up; 'the L^d Chancellor yesterday morn goeing along in a seaman's habit in Anchor Alley in Wapping was discover'd, his Lordship presently told the discoverer he would goe along with him but desir'd him to keep it private for fear of the people soe they went into an Ale house by & sent for a Constable, who with a Guard brought him to Town, all the people huzzaying, & with difficulty did his guard keep him from the Rabble, nay one did strike at him, he was brought in to the Lord Mayors just at dinner time who when he saw ye L^d Chan: thro' feare fell a Cryeing then into a fitt, for which he was blouded & put to Bed, soe the Lord Mayor being ill he coud not sign any warrant, the L. Chanc: satt downe & Eate heartily, but turning about he saw S^r Rob^t Jefferyes Late Mayor who cryed & came to kiss his

Dec. 18,
1688.

hand & then the L^d: Chan^c: alsoe cryed, he said what have I done that people are soe violent ag^t me, one answe^rl. Remember Cornish, he said he would have savd him, but when he cou'd not he savd his Estate, & had not a penny for't, at length My Lord Lucas took charge of him & convey'd him to the Tower, he design'd for Hambrow & the Vessell was fitting with all Expedition wh: created some jealousy that some greate person was to goe off in that ship. The K. left the D. of Northumberland asleep in his chamber when he went away.' John had dined with the Lord Chancellor some six months before, 'being feasted by him as being one of his Jury.'

Dec. 13,
1688.

London went through a short but anxious crisis. John describes the sacking of the Spanish Ambassador's house, and how 'The Mobb' [an abbreviation of *Mobile vulgus* now first coming into use] carried away the very boards and rafters. 'The Amb^r valued his library at 15,000*l*, the Plate, Jewells, Clothes, etc., were of vast value and Papists had carried all their best things thither presuming they would be safe. Ld. Powis has removed his things & my Lady lyeth at a neighbour's for fear they sh^d come thither.' John's friend Mr. Fall 'is a great sufferer, his windows are all beaten down & his house defaced.' 'Sir Henry Bond's fine house at Peckham' is threatened. 'The Capt. of the Trainbands (one Douglas) guarding the Florentine Resident's house in the Haymarket, was shot dead, 'tis beleivd by one of his own men. . . . Aunt Adams was up all night for fear of the Mobb there being 7 Papists, lodgers in her house.' The terror of the Irish night is still upon John as he writes: 'Last night twixt 1 & 2 we were all alarm'd by Drums & Bells that the whole Citty and suburbs were up, upon a Report that the Irish were assaulting houses & killing people near the townes End, all men gott to their arms & lighted Candles in all their Windowes & at their doores, but about 4 or a little after we began to be undeceiv'd & soe went to bed again leaving one or two in a house up: my Aunt Adams heard nothing of this for I sent to Covent Garden this morning to knowe how

they all doe, In James Street & in the Piazza they were up upon the alarm' Lady Abdy writes that the panic spread over 'most parts near London but the Irish did no harm but by their big words.' The best news John can send is that the King has gone off for the last time escorted by the Prince's Guards, 'tis said he wept as he left Whitehall, the P. of Orange is at St. James'. 'His Majestie's going away is of great consequence higher than I can understand,' writes the prudent Mr. Cary, but to most people it meant that the game was up; the strong hands that now grasped the reins were not likely to drop them.

Sir Ralph and Sir R. Temple represented Buckingham once more in the Convention Parliament, that sat from January 1689 to February 1690, and did such memorable work for England. There is great joy in Bucks, Lord Bridgewater is reinstated, and old Dr. Townsend, who has scarce finished preaching obedience to Nero, beseeches Sir Ralph to get his son made 'Muster Master for the Train bands of the County,' under the new King. 'Sir R. Temple has his custom hous place again. I find he will be Vickor of Bray still, let who will raing, & tho' all hats him yet hee gets whot he aims at.'

April 14,
1689

Mun has been over to Oxford to pay up his bills, and 'has given a Treate to his Acquaintance in Trinity College.' His sister is anxious to join him in London for 'the Crowne-nasion, and I want clothes so mitily that I doe not know what to do, they will scarce hang on my back.' A tailor's bill for 'a close fitting Taby jacket' seems to prove that Molly had her wish.

The oppressor being dethroned, men are now free to pity him, and to find fault with their deliverer. Cary writes to Sir Ralph: 'I hear the K is bying the E. of Nottingham's hous at Kensington & implys 700 men in fitting Hamton Court for him, & the coronation I heare is talkt of, all thes things requires great sums of money: I confes popery wod A bin much wors for that wod A destroyed thousands of bodies & souls & estates in A shorttime; bot I heare there is

March 19,
1689.

great discontents now. I have sent you the K's speech wch I liked & disliked, hee being subject to sinisures as well as his meanest subjects.

'I was apt to beeleve King James was dead, not for the report of it, but because I think hee has a load heavigh enough on him to waigh downe the greatest speryted man in the world and ware hee the bitterest enymy to mee I could not but pity him, and bee glad to heare he had dyed a naturall death, afflictions causing too often great sperits to mak thein selvs a way, w^{ch} I pray God presarve all christians from; I am satisfied by him and others that grif kils none; but God knows what is fiteest for all, and therefore best to soffar patiently and wait till ther chang cometh.' There is still a ground swell after the storm, and Cary continues, 'I cannot bot put the present differences of thos as sits at the Helm amonxt my own afflictions, I feare a cevell worr, sinc both Ch: & Laety are so divided, & poor Iorland Lys a bleding.'

Feb. 1689. Young Lady Cavendish, daughter of Rachel Lady Russell writes of the first drawing-room of Wilham and Mary: 'The King applies himself mightily to business, and is wonderfully admired for his great wisdom and prudence in ordering all things. He is a man of no presence and looks very homely at first sight; but if one looks long on him, he has something in his face both wise and good. But as for the Queen, she is really altogether very handsome, her face is very agreeable, and her shape and motions extremely graceful and fine. She is tall, but not so tall as the last Queen. Her room was mighty full of company, as you may guess.'—*Devonshire MSS.*

CHAPTER LVII.

EXEUNT SEVERALLY.

1689-1696.

As the eventful seventeenth century draws to its close, those who have played their parts with Sir Ralph in the Claydon drama are gradually leaving the stage. While their places are being filled by a younger set of actors, a word may be said concerning the exits of some old friends.

In the elder generation, the evergreen and incorrigible Tom claims the first place. He is still liable to sudden and unaccountable changes of abode, and his 'quarteridge' has of late been clanned from Welsh villages whose many-syllabled names have the desired flavour of remoteness. He was unreasonably abusive of a world in which he found so many kindly dupes, and flourished unabashed till 1707, when he was well over ninety. He then died 'merely of old age, his speech and memory perfect to the last.' Richard Seys of Boverton, Cardiff, writes to inform John Verney that 'ye ^{April 1,} old gent: y^r uncle has at last gone to his long home, I find ^{1707.} his late quarterly Revenue (like many of ye former) was in a great measure Anticipated, but Jⁿ Deere by keeping him for some time to a weekly allowance has cleared all his old scores.' He died possessed of '22^l & 1^d' and John asks Mr. Deere whether he had not 'some goods, as Books, Clothes, Plate, etc. wch being disposed of w^d suffice for his burial, without either you or I being out of pocket for your old acquaintance & my relation, whom I never saw in my life, tho' he hath had many a pound from me.' The venerable Tom's personality consisted of 'a Bible & a Treatise of piety,' but

he was 'very decently interred' at his nephew's expense, 1*l*. being spent in distributing bread to the poor 'by his own desire,' and he was 'attended to his grave by a numerous company of the Neighbourhood,' the bell-ringers were properly fee'd, and the genteeler guests provided with wine, so that there is room for hope that Tom may have been satisfied at last!

Penelope was made to be a spinster, and though she twice attempted to frustrate Nature's design, her temperament was never really affected by marriage. She soon tired of Sir John Osborne's society, and was not more afflicted than good manners required when she was again left a widow. But as the infirmities of age increased, her thoughts reverted with some autumnal gleam of tenderness to the baby-girl she had lost forty years ago. 'After driving up & down in the streets in my Coch, by 6 or 7 of ye clocke I am at home; & do find ye nights so long,' but when she adds 'had God blest me with a Dau' I had not kept a maid,' her theory of the uses of a daughter explains the reluctance with which her niece and namesake accepted Dame Penelope's invitations. 'My lady only wants me to wash up her old crape and such like woik,' Pen Stewkeley declared. It was Lady Osborne's boast that she 'had lived a Laborious Life to make a fine shoe to the world, never to wayst one shilling to giv my selfe plesur,' and that was not the kind of housekeeping to make a young relation very comfortable. Like her sisters, she was skilled in domestic medicine; for a cold in the head she mixes an equal 'quantity of White Hellebore root, & nutmeg grated, to take as you do snuff, it clears the brain; & bind conserve of Reddrosis upon y^e eyes layd upon a cloth prity thick'; at other times she recommends white rose water for the eyes, and a syrup of gillyflower cordial. Dame Penelope was 'at home on Mondays to receive visits & they that please may play at cards.' The genteel persons who found their way to her rooms 'on the stairs at Whitehall' gossiped familiarly about the King and the Queen, in a way that would have delighted the Cranford ladies. But some of her grand friends are in

queer straits. 'Her favourite L^d Peterboro' [on the brink of an impeachment] has removed all his things from his house in the country, even sold all Iron off his very gates, & puld down his wainscot, & sold it, nothing remains but the bare walls & windows' He, like some others of Penelope's acquaintance, had followed King James's change of faith, and Nancy Nicholas writes to Sir Ralph of a curious scene in Lady Osborne's death chamber. To the consternation of her relations, the dying woman desired the Countess of Lindsay, who was standing by the bed, to get her a priest, and 'for fear of the worst' Nancy undertook 'to write afterwards to her Lady^p' 'I know she is yr particular frend,' she tells Sir Ralph, ' & so I would not willingly disoblidg her, but in matters of this concern, we cannot be too cautious whier soles air concerned.'

'Anne Nicholas to the Countess of Lindsay: 'Yr La^p may well wonder at yr receiving these lines from me, being a quit stranger to you, but this coms in ye first place to give yr La^p thanks for yr great cair & Kindnes to my neare relation ye La' Osborn, who I heare in lightheartednes last night desired yr Lad^p to bring her a Prest; I besech yr Lad^p not to gratify her in this request, not yt I thinke her capable now to make any judgment of any religion, but S^t Ralph is of a great adg, & I feare such a shok now might hasten his end. I would have wated on yr Honnor, wⁿ you had bin at ye Lady Osborn's but yt my breth wont lett me goe upstairs & would have told you yt she hasn't nor won't want ye atendance of ye devins of our Church, for Mr Lankister & one in her own neyghorhood doth & will atend her.'

Penelope died on the 20th of August, 1695, aged 73. Her will is full of bequests to the great ladies it was her happiness to know; 'The C^{less} of Lynsey' has a silver scallop cup and grater, 'The C^{less} of Plymouth a serpentine cup with a silver cover, the C^{less} of Carnarvon a Silver Toster to toast bread on, Lady Temple, a Bible with silver clasps & a candlestick, Lady Anne Walpole a cup, &c. &c.,' 5*l.* is left 'to a schollar from Oxford to preach her funcrall sermon, £1 to the Parson that buries her, £300 to ye town of Buck^m

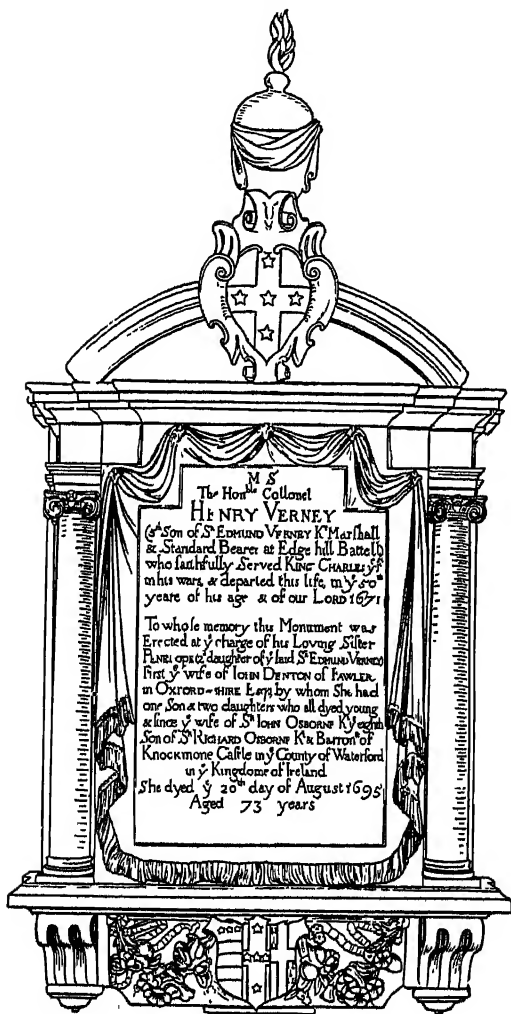
the Interest of it for 6 Poore men, who are to have Green Gownes once in two yeares with a Badge of her father's Armes, S^t R T to name them during his life, & afterwards the Bailiff of Buck^m to fill up the Vacancies for Ever.'

All her nieces are remembered. Pen Stewkeley is appropriately left the clothes she had often helped to mend; but the legacies are carefully graduated. Lady Osborne felt that her silver plate and valuables could only be given to rich people who would take care of them; a pewter vessel, a brass chafing-dish, or a wooden table were bequests more suited to needy relatives, and when the poor parson's widow, Betty Adams, was reached, Nancy tells Sir Ralph that she is left 'Y^r picture & much lumber.' 'She died as she lived, I will say no more.'

One person alone had seen a more genial side of her character; Penelope wrote in old age, 'from my childhood I have loved my Brother Harry Verney, out of my narrow fortun I supplied him wth money & wanted myself; severall yers before he died I was his nurs, & this return he maid me that he truly loved me . . . I dare say no more upon this subject. I find it puts me to a sort of illness. . . . To my Deare brother's memory I have maid this thome . . . & all thoms dos make appere ye honer of our family & Adorns ye Church.' She was laid beside him in the vault at Middle Claydon, and her name added to 'the An scription' on the monument. Her arms occupy the centre of the shield, and those of her two husbands are in subordinate places; typical of the lady who, though she kindly consented to bear the names of Denton and Osborne, was first and last and always a Verney of Claydon.

Cary Lady Gardiner, quick-witted and warm-hearted, was no one's enemy but her own, and if she lost money as fast as her sister hoarded it, she was rich in the affection that Penelope had never known how to win. At Claydon she and her girls were special favourites. Cary Stewkeley lived chiefly at East Claydon, Caroline and Isabella were at home. Penelope (Viccars) and Kitty (Ogle) were married. Her blind daughter Margaret Gardiner lived with her, 'very

sad to be quite dark.' Her stepdaughter Ursula, with all her madcap friends, never seems to have found a mate. Cary Gardner died at Islington, September 2, 1701, and



was buried 'at Bray in Beaks in a vault by her last husband.'

Of Mary Lloyd, but little has come down to us. From John Verney's pocket-book we learn that her children were Humphrey (b. 1657, d. 1715), Verney (b. 1670), Mary (b. 1666), and Ruth (b. —, d. 1725). Mary Lloyd died in 1684; her husband, Robert Lloyd, survived till 1695. Her letters are very bare of news, she acknowledges a 'kinde token' from Sir Ralph and signs 'yooare disconsolatt sister'; but the fact that a brass to her memory was put up in Chester Cathedral seems to imply that she was in easier circumstances in her latter years.

Feb 22,
1681

The tablet itself had a curious story; in 1776 'in new flagging the broad Ile of Chester Cathedral an inscription in brass almost worn out upon a gravestone was disturbed by the workmen, when there appeared another inscription still legible on the reverse.' Mr. T. Crane had the brass conveyed to his own house to copy the inscription, as the name Verney caught his eye. He sent it to his friend Sir John Chetwode asking him for the address of Earl Verney, 'who will not be a little proud of this epitaph which I have rescued from oblivion.' The brass, however, disappeared again, but the inscription was preserved in an old guide-book, and Sir Harry Verney and his eldest son, with the cordial co-operation of Dean Howson, put up a new brass with the old words on the south wall of the nave.

There is a letter to Lady Gardiner from 'Ensign Verney Lloyd in Col. Beaumont's Reg^t at M^r James, at The Three Herrings in little Lombard Street London.' He is twenty-two years of age, and has been serving 'under the D. of Leinster's command in Flanders, fortifying Dixmunde; the King has called us over to England, where we expect (as the Eldest Reg^t) to do duty in the Tower. 'Tis thought that 10 companies belonging to our Reg^t is cast away in the last great storme. . . . Had I Sir Ralphe's Countenance I neede not question a Company, for I daily see it that nothing but friends does the businesse, and upon the least Countenance in the World I should be advanced, for the colonell hath a

great kindness for me.' Col. Beaumont is Governor of Dover; John Verney meets him at Sir Francis Lawley's.

Sir Ralph was glad to use his influence for a nephew who did him so much credit, and his letters show that Capt. Verney Lloyd kept up intimate relations with his mother's family. In 1704 Ruth Lloyd has taken a place as a waiting-gentlewoman, 'but has hir health so ill in sarves' that unless both her brothers help her, 'she cannot tell how to live.' Her sister Mary visits at Claydon in 1706, and is a friend of John's daughters. Capt. Verney Lloyd married Anne Gery; his daughter Elizabeth Lloyd married John Jackson, a solicitor, the secretary and intimate friend of the 4th Duke of Leeds. Their descendants were distinguished in the Church and in various branches of the public service, and several members of the Jackson and Warren families still trace their descent from Sir Edmund Verney the Standard-bearer, through his daughter Mary Lloyd.

In the Church of St. Mary le Virgin at Great Baddow where an ancient ivy covers the whole tower, a black marble slab still records that: 'Below (near those of his own mother & his only son) is the body of the Rev^d. and pious Mr. Charles Adams M.A., who having been a burning and shining light in the Church about XX. years . . . departed hence Sept. 1, 1683, ætat 45'.¹ His widow, 'seeking sum good plas to lay my grey head in,' settles herself in London; her daughters Margaret and Isabella are more popular than Betty had been as a girl, and are in great request. Betty still enjoys a good grumble; 'old & poor peopell,' she says, 'must expect slits from all sorts,' and she fails not to look out for them. She died December 27, 1721.

Dr. Denton's life, prolonged to the age of eighty-six, was vigorous and fruitful to the end. In middle life he had been more of a Royalist than Sir Ralph ever was, but so heartily did he approve of the Revolution, that one of his last literary efforts was a work, 'Jus Regiminis,' dedicated to William III., vindicating the King's position and the

¹ I am indebted to David Houston, Esq., for this information.

May 9,
1691

action of the English people. In 1691 Sir Ralph hurried up from Claydon on the news of the Doctor's illness, and as they were together we have no account of his last hours—only that 'Mr Banck of Preston preached his funeral sermon,' and a crumb of gossip that Sir Richard Temple failed to appear, after his cousin's death, in all the 'blacks' he was in duty bound to wear. The Doctor himself would have justified Sir Richard. His very epitaph in Hillesden Church has the joyful note which was so conspicuous in his life: 'He was blessed with that happy composition of Body & mind that preserved him chearfull, easy & agreeable to the last, & endeared him to all that knew him.'

At the White House there are great reforms; young Edmund, with Sir Ralph's advice, is getting the estate into order, and making a happy home for Molly. The brother and sister are very attractive figures; they are much attached to each other, and full of promise, when, in the spring of 1690, Edmund sickened of a fever in town, and though devotedly nursed by Lady Gardiner and her daughters, and attended by a crowd of eminent doctors, 'as industrious to save him as if he were a king,' he succumbed to it in a few days, before he had completed his twenty-second year. Life was very bright to him, full of hope and ambition, and he fought hard for it; but to the comfort of his family he made a pious end, praying for his grandfather, and grateful for all the love that surrounded him, 'and many good things he said, but tis no wonder to see a man as has lived well, dy well.'

Once more a little fatherless girl is the heiress of the White House and of the manor of East Claydon. Molly's trouble is so great that Lady Gardiner is quite anxious about her; she thinks much of her father, who was 'most tender & loving to me & I being grown up to be A companyon to my last brother makes his loss very bitter to me.' She is a tall slight girl of fifteen, and the sense she has suddenly acquired of being 'grown up' makes her resent her grandfather's orders that her mourning should be 'as little & as cheap as possible, seeing she grows apace.' She



ELIZABETH VERNEY, WIFE OF THE REV. CHARLES ADAMS

writes her own protest to Sir Ralph; she would have a cloth gown as Mrs. Mary Gardiner has for her sister. 'I know my morning will cost a good deall of mony, but I beleve you wod have me morn hansomly for so deare a brother, and since ther is none left but myself to morn for him, and I beg that I may have a tipit bought me, since every gentellwoman has one as makes any show in the world, it will cost 5*l* at least and my lady Gardiner is unwilling to by it till she has orders from you, but I hope if I do gett one you will not be angry.'

March 4,
1690.

Sir Ralph is touched by the child's sorrow and sudden assertion of dignity, and replies kindly. 'I cannot blame you for being so much concerned for the death of soe good a Brother, the loss being Generally great to all his friends & Relations, I pray God to Sanctify this Affliction to us, that wee may make good use of it Since you desire Cloth for Mourning, I will not be against it, And I hope you will weare it with the more care & make it last the handsomer & the longer. I perceive you are very desirous to have a Tippet, I am contented that you should have a very good one, though it should cost Five or Six pounds, and I pray tell my sister Gardiner soe. Child you see how desirous I am to please you, and I doubt not but you will be as willing to please mee in all things which I shall desire of you, which will be a great satisfaction and comfort to me.' The tippet is highly approved of, and Lady Gardiner is doing her best to persuade Molly to ea', 'for her dyat is not as others; I take all the care I can of her, as the only relleck of yr eldest son.'

March 9
1690

When she is settled again at East Claydon, the girl finds the house dull and sad, and the great difference in age between herself and Cary Stewkeley makes Cary, after Mun's death, the duenna rather than the companion of her young cousin. Molly longs for London, where a happy part of her childhood was spent at Mrs. Priest's school; but Sir Ralph dreads for her the chances of infection, which have proved fatal to both her brothers. The lonely girl's chief confidante is a waiting-maid of her mother's, of doubtful

discretion Sir Ralph hears a report that 'Mr. Dingley, a Divine, under pretence of wooing the waiting-maid, Kate Bromfield, carries down a younger brother of quality with designs on M^{rs} Molly Verney,' and that they are lying at the lonely old house of Dorton, 'with design to ride over to East Claydon.' Instead of getting Molly to stay with him in town, where she might enjoy the companionship of girls of her own degree, and quietly dismissing the maid (as a woman would have done), Sir Ralph, in great anxiety, writes to his steward Coleman to intervene at this delicate crisis.

The man of affairs accordingly arrives at the White House, desires the attendance of the ladies, unfolds his story, and conveys to them Sir Ralph's commands that no such guests be received on any pretext, and that 'Mistress Molly pretend some excuse & keep her chamber.' Mrs Cary desired a copy of the letter, Mrs Molly expressed no opinion, 'only read it & gave it me again & went away.' But Coleman had an uneasy feeling that he had not got to the bottom of the matter, for the young lady 'was seen A crying, & I fear by what I can understand that Mrs. Mary Verney may have too much kindness for M^{rs} Brunfield.'

Mary, who is quite capable of 'pretending an excuse' when it suits her, without the help of Sir Ralph or his steward, keeps her own counsel, but a little later she is much vexed that Sir Ralph will not allow her to bring Mrs. Bromfield to London as her attendant. She shall be provided with a maid, and Mrs. Verney must not be left without Kitty Bromfield's care, to which Molly replies promptly that her former maid Mrs. Norman is now out of place, and will take care of her mother, to their mutual satisfaction; and she thinks her grandfather cannot be 'unsenceable' that she would prefer a maid 'that is used to me, & knows all my ways then any stranger.' She writes respectfully, but very warmly on the subject, excusing her bad writing 'for they are at Cards about my ears being my birthday, that I can scarce tell what I writ,' a fact amply proved by her signing herself 'Yr most dutyfull and obedient Granfather to command, Mary Verney.'

After this her marriage becomes a pressing consideration, and as if hearts, like houses, could be let unfurnished, Sir Ralph is in treaty for her with Mr. Dormer, a family whose former relations with her father had never been friendly. Molly submits for a time, but with increasing distaste, she complains equally of Mr. Dormer's attentions, and of the lack of them. She had seen the ignominious downfall of passive obedience, the right of private judgment was in the air, and when authority wished to give her a lord and master she had grown to detest, she managed with skill and dexterity a revolution on her own account. Happily, the man to whom she gave herself away proved not unworthy, though he came by his authority in an unconstitutional manner.

Mary disappeared one summer's day from her uncle John's house, leaving a startling note behind her. 'Sir, I have bin for some time married to Mr Kelynge & upon his desires am now gone to live with him att his Mother's (in Fisher St. in Red Lyon Square), I hope you will excuse my not giving you notice of this before as well as my abrupt leaving of your house, I was in fear of putting you in a passion the sight of which my temper cannot very well bare.' The secret had been kept a week. Mary writes more fully to her grandfather to forgive her for having 'married the only parson in the world I thought capable of making me happy.' He is her equal in every respect but 'in point of fortune,' and she is confident 'his personal merits will atone for that defect.' John Keeling, of Southill, also writes a full account of himself, with many protestations of his devotion, and anxiously clears himself of interested motives in his clandestine marriage with an heiress under age. Sir Ralph was not easily appeased. He had been kind and generous to his granddaughter, and could not understand how much courage the girl needed to be frank with him. Her uncle John interceded for her, and Rachel Lady Russell, now rapidly becoming 'stark blind,' longed to make peace for little Molly, when her friend, Lady Gardiner, told her all about it. The latter writes to Sir Ralph :

June 16,
1693.

June 18,
1698.

'My Lady Rossel told me 1sterday that my Lord Soffolks daughter was lately marryed much wors, for she has marryed A vally de shamber, so said, yr grandaughter had not dishonrd herselfe only brought herself to live meanly, therefore hoped you wod pardon her, & not make it so great a Consarn to you as to predygiss yr helth & much more to this purpos. And I beg of you to take this advice from her as well as from mee, to make the best of what is past recovery, & wish I could heare shee had bin to beg yr pardon, who I dare say cannot think herselfe hapy till shee has it, but know her temper is so shy, as that shee never could speak her mind to you, wch has bin one of her great failings.'

June 20,
1698.

Lady Gardiner, who loved her dearly, writes to him again of Molly's first reappearance in the family after her 'stolen maching.' 'Deare Brother, Isterday Mr. Keeling brought y^r grandaughter to mee, wch I confes was the sadest meeting I ever had with her, & maid my children stand like mutes being so full of giife. Bot I told my mind to him fust; & at last took corage to spake to her wch I find is highly afflicted for offending you & begs you will give her leve to beg her pardon on her knees of you for marying without yr consent'; but the little bride feels the joy of having jilted Mr. Dormer to be very supporting nevertheless.

Sir Ralph held out even against Lady Russell's advice, but he was pursued by affectionate letters from the culprits. If he had a cold, Mr. Keeling's servant appeared with letters of respectful inquiry; as soon as he was said to be better, they each wrote to congratulate him. The bride appealed to him 'to recall your wonted affection towards me, & S^r lett it not offend you that nothing but the want of your blessing can make me uneasie for otherwise I am perfectly happy.' Her husband was a gentleman by birth and breeding: he 'was the son of Sir John Kelyng Serg^t at Law,' and grandson of Sir John Keeling, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, who died in 1671. His sister Martha was the second wife of Sir John Osborne of Chicksands, Dorothy Osborne's brother; and Mary Keeling and her husband pay long visits to

'Brother & Sister Osborne' in the home so well known to us from Dorothy's letters.¹ Another time John Keeling is carrying his wife down to Knebworth to his brother-in-law Sir Wm. Lytton's, where they stay a fortnight, and Mary is 'very well and Merry,' she writes to Sir Ralph. 'I have been received with the greatest civility by all my husband's relations imaginable & he, except in fortune, hath all the good qualifications you could have wished for me in a husband to render me completely happy . . . I cannot live in your displeasure & unless you design the breaking of my heart for an atonement I beg of you Sir no longer to defer your blessing.' John Keeling's 'endeavours for a reconciliation' continue to be 'restless in pursuit of it.' Sir Ralph yields at last, and Mary's short married life seems to have been very happy. They visit some of her old neighbours in 1695, Mis. Duncombe at East Claydon and Mrs. Butterfield at the Rectory, travelling with a man and maid, 'on single horses'

July 19,
1693

Mary Keeling died in the spring of 1696, after giving birth to a daughter, also christened Mary, to whom Sir Ralph was godfather. For some weeks it seemed as if the baby would live, but 'Miss Keeling,' as the little mite is styled in the letters, died in May—the last of her race. Mary Verney, the widow, was in one of the long silent fits which often succeeded her hysterical attacks, when Cary Stewkeley told her of the death of 'Miss,' as she always called her daughter. 'She said not a word, but her eyes filled with tears, & I think that she understood.'

Feb. 10,
1696.

Mary Verney lived on till 1715, having survived all her descendants, and her faithful steward 'Anthony Dover, Batchelor,' whose whole life was devoted to her service. At times her mind seemed to wake up again; she would ask for needlework, and be very busy over it; she would send her love and duty to Sir Ralph, and thank him for the improvements he had been making in her garden. The poor people of the village, whom she loved, continued to

¹ *Letters from Dorothy Osborne to Sir W. Temple*, edited by Judge Parry.

cherish her memory. In the parish books of East Claydon it is recorded that 20s. a year are given away 'on the 5th of June being the day of the death of Mrs. Mary Abell alias Verney, the Great Bell tolling whylst the money is distributing . . . She was the Relict of Edmund Verney Esq^r . . . who for several years, XXX, was very Melancholy, during her husband's life . . . & continued soe 27 years after his decease, Lady of this Manor, and notwithstanding her lunacy shee was a Woman of Extraordinary Goodness, Piety & Devotion. She departed this life in the 74th year of her age.' Her property, which had been the subject of so much scheming, reverted to the Abell family, but in 1726 William Abell sold it to Ralph Verney, 2nd Viscount Fermanagh, for 25,800*l*.

In 1692 John Verney makes his family very happy by his second marriage, with 'Mary, one of the daughters of the Hon^{ble} Sir Francis Lawley, Baronet, of St. Powell,¹ Shropshire, Master of H. M. Jewel-office,' and of Anne Whitmore his wife. Mary was a tall, dignified woman, aged thirty-one, of a gracious presence, and the mode in which her black hair towered above her forehead made her statelier still. John presents her with 'a breast jewel worth about 100*l*.' 'Diamonds are cheaper than they were a dozen years ago, I design to buy her another toy of 50*l*. after marriage in what she likes best.' He gives her a set of 'Dressing table plate, & brushes & a looking glass; she said her Mother designed her such a thing but now she would have it in somewhat else . . . I have put side glasses to my Coach, & taken off the redd Tassels from my harness & put on White ones & also white trappings on ye bridles & made new Liveries for my Serv^{ts}, the Arms I will alter shortly by putting her Coate with mine.' It is suggested that they should be married privately at the Abbey 'after Morning service on Sunday wch ends at 11 a'clock; her mother saith

¹ The name is thus spelt on the monument in Middle Claydon Church, and in John Verney's note-book, but the old home of the Lawleys was Spoonhill, in the parish of Much Wenlock; and there seems no trace of 'St. Powell.'

that as the Quire is the publickest so it is the privatest place, but as the Doores are all of open wainscote soe that people may look in at any time, & you know it is a thoroughfare, I do not admire my Ly. Lawley's contrivance of privacy, but I said nothing.'

'As to my marriage,' he writes again to his father, July 13, 'Sunday being a Sacrament day it seems it could not be at St. James', unless we could have come by 6 in the morn^g, for there being Prayers at 7, some are allways from that time in the Chappell, & therefore wee were marryed at West' in Harry the 7th's Chap^l by Dr Rich^d Only . . . my Wife desires her humble duty to you, if she were here she w^d write to you herself . . . for she is an Extraordinary sweet natured woman.' The letters of congratulation are pleasant reading. The bride's aunt, Lady Whitmore, is 'shure, if Mr Verney be not happie in a Wife, I shall beleve it his fault & so I shall tell him when I am Aquainted with him, as I now desire to be, he being yours'; her brother Tom Lawley writes to her with extreme affection, and the Palmers put sad memones aside, to give John's wife a kindly welcome.

Dame Penelope prides herself that she made 'the first motion of this marrig, I dare answer for the Bride y^t she will be very kind to the childering for that I have always told her.' 'Ye more I se y^r daughter so much ye more I like her,' Nancy writes to Sir Ralph, '& insted of my advising of her I thinke myself fitt to recieve advis from her; w^h all y^r family did din wth us & we again at Whit Hall we wanted nothing nor nobody but y^r self to complet y^r Weding solemnity, but we often drank y^r health & hartily wished you wth us.' There is much interchange of hospitalities, and it is the wonder of both families how with so small a park Sir Ralph can furnish them all with so much venison.

John has a negro page, who waits upon his wife; he is described, when he is first brought to Middle Claydon, as a Moor of Guinea of about six years of age.' His baptism (October 6, 1689) is entered in the Parish Register; the little black boy's gossips were 'his Master Mr John Verney,' and the party from the White House, 'Edmund and Molly Verney

& Cary Stewkeley'; he was named Peregrine Tyam. He appears in the background of Mrs John Verney's picture, and on September 14, 1707, there is an entry of his burial at Claydon. My Lady Latimer has 'a dwarf' in her household at this time; it was one of the fashions of the day that fair Englishwomen should be served by such uncouth pages.

Sept 20,
1698.

There is a bright little letter from Mrs. John Verney to Sir Ralph, thanking him for a happy visit with her husband and his children to Claydon; 'My father and mother send thare sarves, they have bin to give joy to Sir Marten Beckman y^t is new married, he is 67 & his bride 60, this increases my feare of a mother in law, but nothing shall make me remane les then Yr ever Dutyfull & obedint Daur & sarvant, Mary Verney.'

Oct. 1698.

She writes to John at Wasing that 'Bro. Palmer' has dined with her; 'Cousin Kellin & Cousen Denton' are with her; she nurses little Ralph very kindly through a fever, and wins all hearts in the family circle. John's happiness seems complete when a son is born to them, to whom the two grandfathers and Lady Whitmore stand sponsors; then the child dies, and Mary falls a victim to small-pox when she is expecting for the second time to become a mother. Her husband sums up the story on her monument. 'She had one son named John who dyed within the year, and lyeth with her in the vault within the Chancell [at Middle Claydon]. She departed this life on the 24th Aug. 1694 aged 33 years.'

It will be seen by this review of the family history, that Sir Ralph was paying the penalty of protracted life; he had outlived almost all his contemporaries. Two infirm widows, Cary Gardiner and Betty Adams, alone remained of the large circle of brothers and sisters except Tom, who could scarcely be said to belong to it. His old friends and correspondents, Dr. Denton and Sir Roger Burgoyne, Sir Nathaniel and Lady Hobart, Doll Leeke and Dame Vere Gawdy, had entered into rest. The Great Rebellion, the Restoration, the Revolution, in all of which he had played his part, had become matters of history. Having thrown himself with much zest into the work of the Convention Parliament, which consolidated the



Lentall pinx.

MARY VERNEY, *née* LAWLEY, SECOND WIFE OF JOHN VERNEY

work that the Long Parliament of his youth had begun, he expected to be re-elected for Buckingham in February 1690, but that inveterate schemer Sir Richard Temple had secretly taken measures to secure the two seats for himself and for Alexander Denton, whose share in the transaction was as little creditable. There was an outburst of indignation in the family, but Sir Ralph saved the situation by his magnanimity. With gentle dignity he reminded his godson and his old colleague that it was needless to intrigue against a man who had no private interests to serve, and was ready to retire whenever the borough found a worthier representative. He had the satisfaction of feeling that he had left Buckingham the better for his long political connection with it. He had, as Mr. Butterfield writes, 'erected a lasting monument of his munificence' in the town hall (often promised by rival candidates, and forgotten when the elections were over), 'built about 1685 at the expense of Sir Ralph Verney.' The borough was in good humour, for the long vexed question of the locality of the Assizes had been settled in its favour. 'The Bailiffe & 2 Burgesses of Buckingham have been att London to give the Queene thanks for the Assizes, & have kist her Majestie's hand, & are come down with great joy beyond expression.'

July 17,
1692

Sir Ralph keeps up his interest in public affairs, and rejoices at the victorious conclusion of King William's Irish campaigns. 'Such joy was never seen in town since K. Charles came in, for in all streets & alleys it was so light that you might have pickt up a pin in the streets, with bon-fires & lights in rows in the windows as was set as thick as they could stand.' Sir Ralph finds ample occupation in his retirement, and is as hospitable as ever. 'No doubt but you are always full of company,' writes a grateful relation. 'Who would not be glad to come to Middle Claydon when Sir Raph Verney is there? We would make the Kingdom happy if we could plant persons of y^r compassionate humor to help us poor mortals, y^t cannot help ourselves.'

Oct. 15,
1691.

Sir Ralph is still the central figure round which all the others are grouped. His lifelong friend, Sir Roger Burgoyne

had drawn this portrait of him in his sixtieth year: 'However you come by it, you have the quickest intelligence of any man I know. . . . You are now become, I think, the Generall Trustee of all that know you. Your Charity, Piety, & Friendship, though it bringe much outward trouble, yet I am confident it is attended with a great deal of inward contentment; it is so naturall to you soe to do kindnesses to your friends, that I beleeve the pleasure they have in the favours they receive, cannot exceed that you take yourself in those you give.'

His Puritanism was so graciously compounded that it was to him his grandchildren and their friends appealed if a wild young spark was to be got out of a scrape that threatened the gallows, or a damsel, gentle or simple, was disappointed in love. 'Tell me not of y^r age,' writes his favourite sister when he was already an elderly man, 'for I am resolved to think you but 40 years old this twenty years, if I live so long, for more than that I would not have you, so long as I live, but whatever your age is, I thank God y^r infirmities are not so many as most young men have.'

Sir Ralph spent the spring of 1696 in town; he was racked with a cough, which the east winds increased even when he kept 'close at home,' and the 'dried walnuts,' which he took medicinally, do not sound like a comforting remedy. His lean figure was worn to a shadow, and he suffered from many infirmities of old age without being mastered by them; the letters he dictated were clear and precise as of old; his head was as sound and his heart as kind as ever.

In the early summer Sir Ralph made the last of his many journeys from London to Claydon. It was an inclement season, 'the ordinary sort of people find it as cold as in winter,' yet the relations hear with horror that Sir Ralph has had made for himself 'a bathing tob.' He revives a little with the satisfaction of being at home again, he gets into the Fir Tree Walk in the warmest hours of the day, and 'on all faire days he goes out in the Coach to take the aire.'

The faithful old sisters, who are in 'drooping spirits,'

long to nurse him, but do not like to propose a visit unasked ; Sir Ralph is never lonely at Claydon . he sees Coleman daily about the farms, and keeps up a brave show of transacting his ordinary business . It is suggested to him, however, that a favourite niece, Margaret Adams, has been ill, and would be benefited by country air ; Sir Ralph gladly asks her to Claydon, and she never leaves him again. His other niece, Cary Stewkeley, is still living at the White House, having been asked by the Abells to continue her care of Mary Verney, and so the cousins meet daily . Cary was welcomed wherever there was sickness or sorrow, she had gentleness and patience combined ' to a miracle, with an undaunted & masculin resolution, the meekness of a lamb & the courage of a Lyon.'

The gentle maiden ladies, who had already reached middle life, were welcomed as young girls in so venerable a household, and got on admirably with Sir Ralph and his old servants. They shared in Mrs. Lillie's disappointment when her master sent away her savoury meats untasted ; they did their best to help the faithful Hodges when he strove to confine Sir Ralph within the paths of prudence, and kept John Verney constantly informed of his father's condition.

The twice widowed John was courting a wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Dan. Baker and his beautiful wife, Barbara Steele. Her good sense and sweet temper had made a pleasant impression on the older members of the family.¹ She proved herself a good wife and kind stepmother in after years. John came down to Claydon at intervals with ' Little Master ' ; ' the sight of you & your child did much to revive Sir Ralph,' the cousins write, but John was busy with the settlements, meeting Alderman Baker, and attending upon ' the young gentlewoman,' who sent Sir Ralph her humble service. Sir Ralph, unselfish as ever, would not hear of John's leaving his ' mistress till your occasions which I know are great be over.' He writes in much detail about his son's marriage,

¹ Her sister Sarah married Narcisus Luttrell; her niece Dorothy Baker, was ancestress of the first Lord Sheffield.

corresponds with John's little daughter Mary, and only makes the briefest allusions to his own failing health. Cary Gardiner recommends many herbs and drugs, and prescribes fomentations for his swollen leg, but Sir Ralph does not wish to be fussed over. When Peg Adams wants him to leave off his asses' milk, he only retorts upon his nurse that she herself drinks much more whey than is good for her. Betty Adams, old before her time, yet performs his commissions with alacrity 'I am glad you liek your speting-pot,' she writes, 'it is the handsomest I could get. I shall obey your orders about the Ilucaback.' Her brother continues to send up his welcome hampers of Claydon delicacies, and desires the cloths to be returned to him. 'The pig was as good as one could eat,' writes the grateful Cary.

Aug 11,
1698.

Sir Ralph still gets to church, though he feels 'as weak as a two year old child,' and on a Sunday in August he has to go out in the midst of Mr. Butterfield's sermon, forbidding the ladies to disturb themselves. When they rejoined him he was looking 'most lamentably,' and they persuaded him to be carried up to his room in a chair. 'Mrs. Lillie is extreame carfull of him, and gets all those things for him, which he used to love and will take.'

Cary Stewkeley would often bring 'her nightclothes in her pockett,' when her cousin was more than usually anxious, but Sir Ralph never saw any reason for her to remain, and was afraid she might be censured for neglecting her proper charge. So she returned that Sunday night with a heavy heart to East Claydon; but when she got back in the morning Sir Ralph had revived, and the next day was one to be long and lovingly remembered. Both ladies wrote a full account of it to John.

'Cousin Denton, Cousin Drake, Mun Woodward, and one Mr. Lewis' (Lucy?) had come over to inquire, and the hospitable old man was delighted to see them. Peg Adams persuaded him to stay upstairs, and the whole company assembled in his dressing-room. 'He dined at table with us,' Cary writes, 'and I thought for him he eat a very good dinner, and he spoek as harty as he has done this twell-

month.' 'Dr. Blackmore desires him to forbear beer,' writes Peg, and the gentlemen came to her aid by assuring him 'that wine and water was properer for him,' and 'very cheerfully he talked with them. He so often changes that I am unwilling to please myself too much with his amendment, he knows not of my writing, but told me last night that he would by no means have you come, until you had Leasure . . . with much adoe we have got him to have a little haitening broth made for him,' and he will sometimes take 'half his porringer full of jelly.' Sir Ralph has given Hodges some venison for his friends, which John is asked to send 'to Mr Lovet Linen Draper at the White Bear in Cornhill, a little beyond the Exchange'; he writes anxiously, 'Sir my Master I think growes weaker & weaker, & eatas very little at dinner, hee keepes his chamber & lyes down on his bed a little after his diner, till about six that he rises to prayer, he gets little sleep in the night. I watched last night with him & I thought him fine & pert in the morning, but hee fell off again in the afternoone as hee doth most Daies.'

There is a break in the letters when John is at Claydon; by the middle of September he is back in Hatton Gardens, and on the 20th Sir Ralph sends him up a hamper, and Sept. 20,
1696. dictates an admirable business letter. He has sent to Mr. Busby about 'Son Keeling's bill in Chancery'; he acknowledges the return of 'the Cloth your pigg went in,' and concludes 'for my owne health, I still grow weaker, pray God bless you and yours.'

It was almost the last effort of the brave spirit and the failing body; 'he lyes in his bed all the morning, and upon it all the afternoon,' and 'dus not now rise from it at night to eat his supper nor say his prayers.

Sir Richard Temple comes over to dine with his old House of Commons colleague, but, finding Sir Ralph in bed, he goes on to London. Cary Gardiner prays for him many times a day on her knees, and her friend, the saintly Lady Russell, sends him an affectionate message that she makes it her daily petition that he may recover. But the prayers

of devout women were no longer to keep the tired old man from his rest. On the morning of the 24th Cary Stewkeley found on her arrival that the master of the house knew not whether she went or stayed, so to her cousin's great relief she settled herself at Claydon House and took her part in watching by the bedside, and in writing the detailed accounts sent daily to John. Edmund would have shared their vigil; John, having satisfied himself that his father was well-cared for, could not stand the long days of inaction.

'He lays pretty quiet, but says nothing but rambling discourses nor knows nobody now.' 'All his servants are as diligent and careful as possible, two have watched with him every night.' 'Sometimes I think he may live 2 or 3 days then I think not so long, God knows all we have now to lose in him good man, I do so pray for his happy passage out of this world I am in so great a consarn I can hardly tell what I say or do'

Mr Butterfield was sent for to recommend Sir Ralph's soul to God. There was a solemn pause of some hours, and then a horse was saddled in haste to carry letters to town. 'My dear Uncle, your good father,' Cary writes, 'died at 12 o'clock this night' Both ladies address their letters to Sir John Verney, Baronet, and while praying that he may bear his loss with resignation, wish him joy in the same breath of his new estate and honours.

Sept. 24,
1696.

John sends down orders immediately to Coleman about 'the next duty and service that can be performed for my father, which is to have him laid where he commanded. . . . His body is to be embalmed. . . . I had thought to invite the neighbouring Gentry to the funerall which I computed to be about 40 or 50, but this afternoon meeting with some near relations and opening my Father's scaled-up will, wee find that he orders to be burried *as privately and with as little pomp as may be*, these are his very words,' and John 'not being able to find a medium (without giving offence) betwixt a private burriall and inviting all the neighbouring gentry,' decides upon the former and desires his letter to be read out to the ladies and to Mrs. Lillie.

Sept 26,
1696.



Sir Godfrey Kneller pinx.

SIR JOHN VERNWY, BART.

'Pray give my service to my kindred and to my friends,' he writes, 'and have a care of my Deare Father's body' He desires that the Hall should be hung with black baize, 'the entry from the Hall door to the Spicery door, and the best Court Porch, likewise the Brick Parlour from top to bottom,' where a dozen chairs are to be covered with black and the three great tables

John's decision was not approved of; Peg Adams expressed the general opinion of Claydon when she wrote, 'I should have thought that a man so generally known to be loved in the country, it would have been very decent to have some of the gentry carry him to his grave'; and Cary Gardiner in her bed 'told all the clocks from one to six' thinking over her nephew's interpretation of his father's will; 'to have no pomp,' she writes, 'may relate to strangers. . . . I confes on serious thoughts I think tis best to bury him publickly, without thos lengths as my brother may mean pomp.'

Her daughter Cary had remained on a few days at Claydon House, that she and her cousin might receive the Sacrament together, on that first Sunday when they had leisure to realise the greatness of their loss. She now wrote from East Claydon 'Let me know when my deare Uncle is beried that I may steall out to waight on his body to the grave since it is so privat.' But the relations acknowledged that there was no want of affection on John's part, 'no child dus more lamenet for a father than he does,' and when 'he went out of town to attend his father to his grave with all the four children,' Cary Gardiner had no other regret than that she was 'too infirm to pay him that last love and service, who loved him as the best of brothers ought to be loved . . . and that must shortly go to him that I becleave a blest Saint in Heaven.'

It was a cold, wet autumn day when the family gathered round the vault in Middle Claydon Church; the neighbours, rich and poor, waited not for an invitation to show respect to their old friend. 'The rooms looked very handsomly, though the Heavens wept with all his relations at his

Oct 13,
1696.

funeral.' 'You had so much mob,' writes Nancy Nicholas, 'what would it have been had it been otherways [than private] Ye King was last Sunday at Whitehall Chapl, tis the first time since the Queen dyed, and I was told by one that was ther he looked full of trouble and concern.'

Oct 12,
1696.

'I thank God that we all got home without any accident,' writes Cary to John from East Claydon after the funeral, 'but all one side of me was as wet as if I had been abroad, for it was so dark we durst not put up the glass, and the wind and the rain did beat so in, and indeed I have taken a cold and have been ill ever since.'

When, in after years, a master-hand drew the picture of an old English squire, the 'Coverley Papers' furnished 'so living a likeness of the man, and endeared him to their readers to such a point, that his death had at last to be announced with all the circumstances of an overpowering affliction. "I question not," says Addison, "but that my readers themselves will be troubled at the hearing of it"'

After sharing the vicissitudes of Sir Ralph's long life, in the 'Verney Letters,' it is impossible to stand by his grave without a kindred feeling of regret. Two hundred years and more have elapsed since that stormy October day when he was laid to rest, but Claydon still has kept his memory green, and we would part from him with some comfortable words, written while Sir Ralph Verney was yet a boy

'But above all, beleeeve it, the sweetest Canticle is, Nunc dimittis, when a Man hath obtained worthy Ends. . . . Death has this also, That it openeth the Gate to good Fame.'

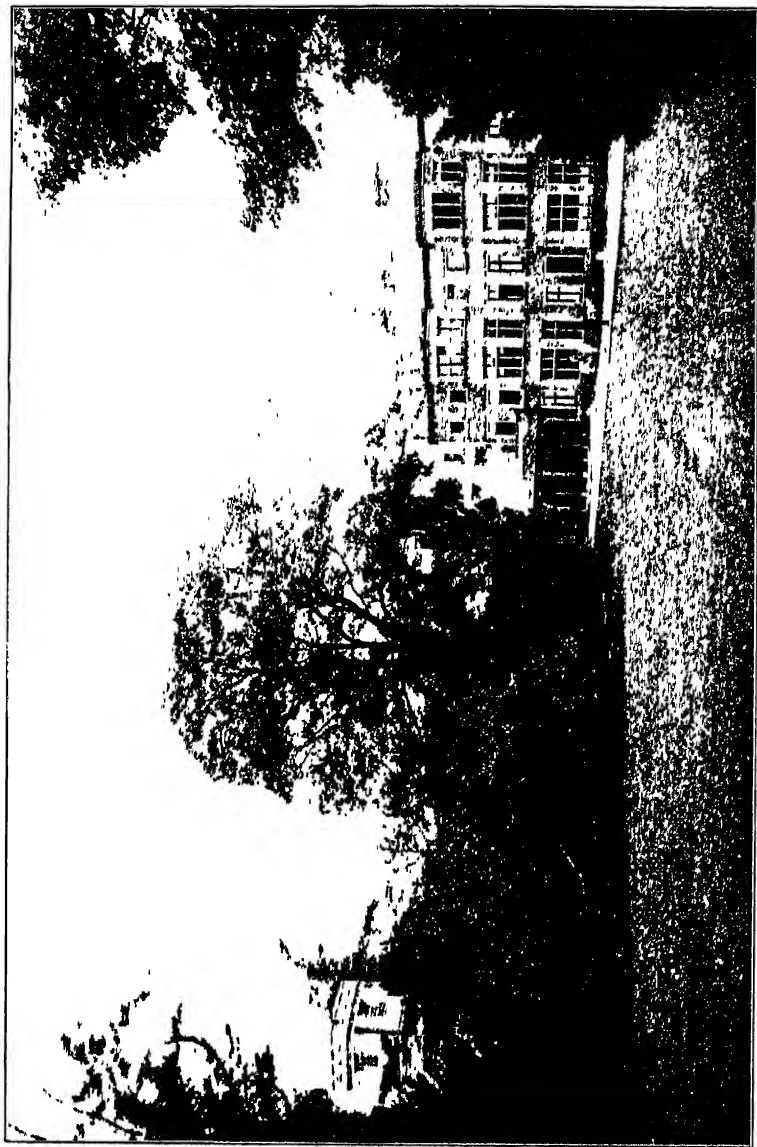


Photo S. G. Tarver

CLAYTON HOUSE AND MIDDLE CLAYTON CHURCH IN 1896

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